

FROM CANAAN TO THE PROMISED LAND

**Pioneer Migration from Hommedal Parish
(Landvik and Eide Sub-Parishes), Southern Norway,
to St. Joseph, Missouri and East Norway, Kansas**

**by
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Present-day photograph of the Igland homestead, Landvik Parish, in winter. By courtesy of Anna Igland Bendixen.

Front page: Moray (formerly East Norway), Doniphan County, Kansas. Own photo, 2006.



Roubidoux's Landing in St. Joseph, MO. Own photo, 2006.

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Thanks are due to a number of people who have pushed me along and acted as the good helpers in the long haul towards finishing this project. It has been a solitary work and a marathon run, but a particularly demanding race since I have been in a freelance position, basically outside academia and a university environment, and forced to use vacations and short and irregular periods of spare time to research and write this dissertation.

In the little township of Grimstad, several kind and helpful natives have joined me in my search for material concerning the “Landvik-group” of 1846: Anne Møretro who is still in contact with the descendants of the Igland tribe in Missouri and has an ocean of experience from her work at the *County Archives*; Anna Igland Bendixen who has willingly shared information about her own family with me; the members of *Landvik Historielag/Historical Society*; the Public Library in Grimstad, represented by Odd Johnsen who has worked miracles in obtaining often rather obscure books and articles; and in the neighbouring town of Arendal, the adept staff at *Aust-Agder Arkivet/ County Archives*. Also in my quaint little hometown on the seaside, former Associate Professor at Agder College, Bob Baehr, has for years been a pillar of support and encouragement in my academic endeavours. His steady hand on finances in *The American Studies Association in Norway* gave me the opportunity to travel to Missouri and Kansas in 2006, and spend the summer in St. Joseph and Troy. It was in *ASANOR* that I met Associate Professor David Mauk who agreed to give me advice, and who has been a constructive critic of my work from his base in *ILOS* at the University of Oslo.

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Once in St. Joseph, Missouri, I was overwhelmed by the friendly reception given me by the Nelson family, descendants of the pioneers of 1846. Mort Nelson, Jane Nelson Thompson, and Catherine MacAdams opened their arms, homes, and hidden genealogical treasures, and guided me into the nooks of family history. Co-ordinating my search of contacts and material all the time was Jackie Lewin of the *St. Joseph Museum*.

The moment I ventured into the open spaces of Kansas, other helpers took over, and Pete Duncan of the *Doniphan County Historical Society* put me in contact with people who were of Norwegian origin. My headquarters was in the Public Library in Troy, and indeed the

whole town seemed to be at my disposal. On my return to Norway, Seth Smith of the *Missouri State Historical Society* and the friendly members of the staff at the *Kansas State Historical Society* have carried on the valuable assistance.

I have for a rather long period been involved in the kind of work which devours time and mind. Members of my family have showed me great patience and encouragement. My two sons have expressed faith in my progress, and Magnus has offered me precise and intelligent readings of the many pages. Ingeborg, my dear, has stood by my side, and lovingly accepted my many dimly-lit hours alone with my computer. I thank you all!

Grimstad, July 29, 2008

Erik Aalvik Evensen

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PREFACE

I want to know why

I had travelled down the Last Chance Road near Troy in Kansas, equipped with a less than detailed map, but with ample assurances from at least one local helper that there was a Norwegian cemetery some miles to the west of the town.

About an hour later I was in the middle of what seemed to me an endless, undulating plain of Indian corn and grassy patches interspersed with bright red Indian paint-brushes. There was not a house in sight, but on a little windswept hillock an iron railing with a heavy double gate had been erected. Inside the railing the grass was brown and dry with the summer heat. Some twenty headstones were arranged in four or five rows, some of them slanting, and most of them worn and stained by the sun and the wind and the rain. I touched the uneven surfaces, and read familiar names: Nelson, Erikson, Steanson. Some of the inscriptions were hard to read, but all were in Norwegian and told of lives begun in Norway at the beginning of the 19th century.

Two days earlier I had been in a similar situation in the Nelson Cemetery in St. Joseph, Missouri. The family names on the headstones were largely the same, but the surroundings had a different colour: the grass was lush, and several little brooks found their way between the low hills. Looking across the Missouri River, I saw the sun setting over the Kansas plains, with bluish thunderstorms building up in the summer heat.

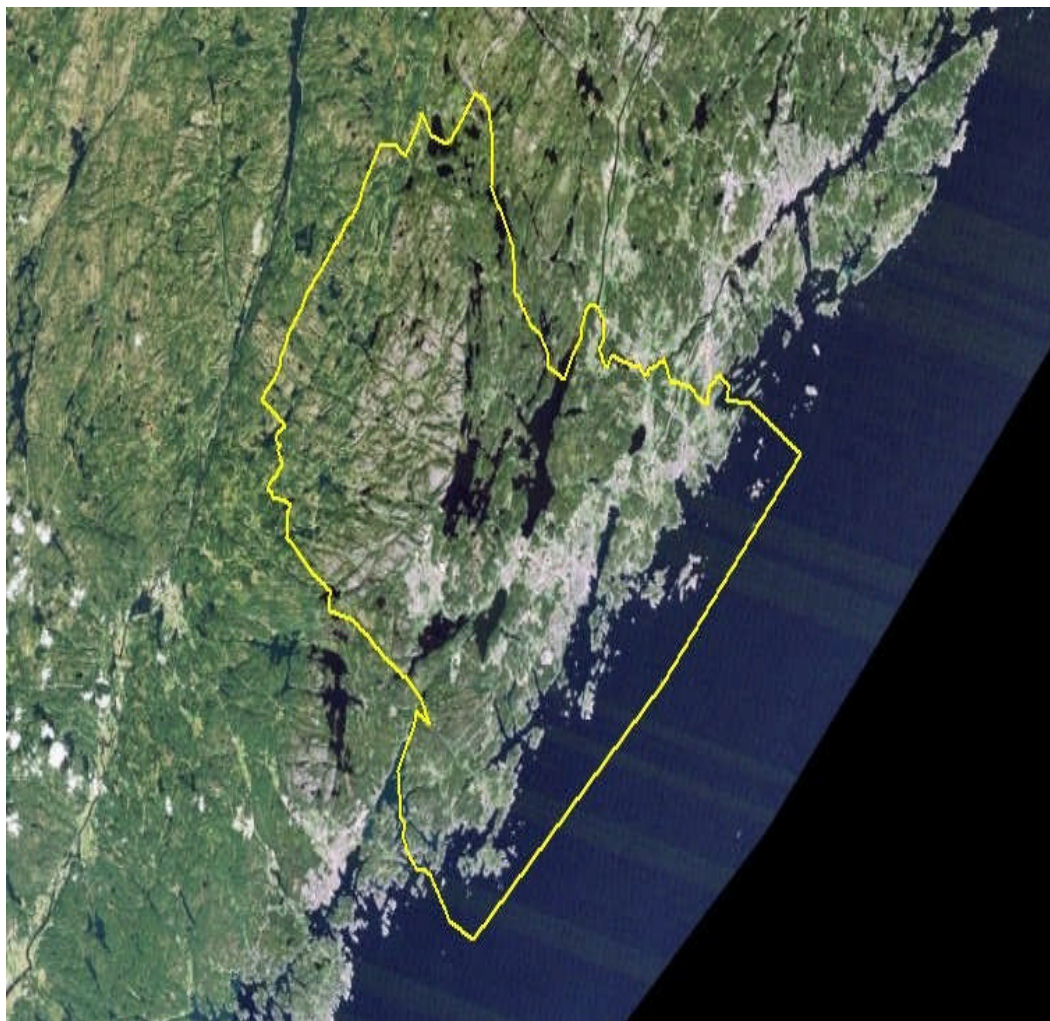
I was deeply touched on both occasions. I had come a long way from my home in Southern Norway, following in the footsteps of some 80 Norwegians who burnt their bridges around 1846 in the hope of finding a better life in America. With soft winds touching my hair, memories of childhood awoke from deep slumber, and I was brought back to the strawberry fields near old and venerable Landvik Parish Church. A brother and his sister lived on the little farm. They were my own kinsfolk, and in my mature age I seemed to remember that hazy and lazy summers were spent among the tempting berries, and sometimes in the attic where I would search a huge “Amerika-trunk”. The country store was a short distance off, they sold “Pin-up” ice-cream, and to get there, I had to walk past the cemetery where also members of my own family had been laid to rest. An “uncle” was sometimes there with pockets full of Wrigley’s spearmint. He was a restless soul who kept travelling back and forth

between Norway and America. Once in a while he would talk with funny r's of the land "over there".

Many years later I bought one of the quaint, wooden houses in Grimstad. Inside the walls of the little house there was a treasure. Two young postal thieves had hidden 67 unopened letters, evidently in the hope of returning and finding money and other valuables. All the letters were written in Brooklyn in 1896, and the story eventually became a book. And I was hooked on migration.

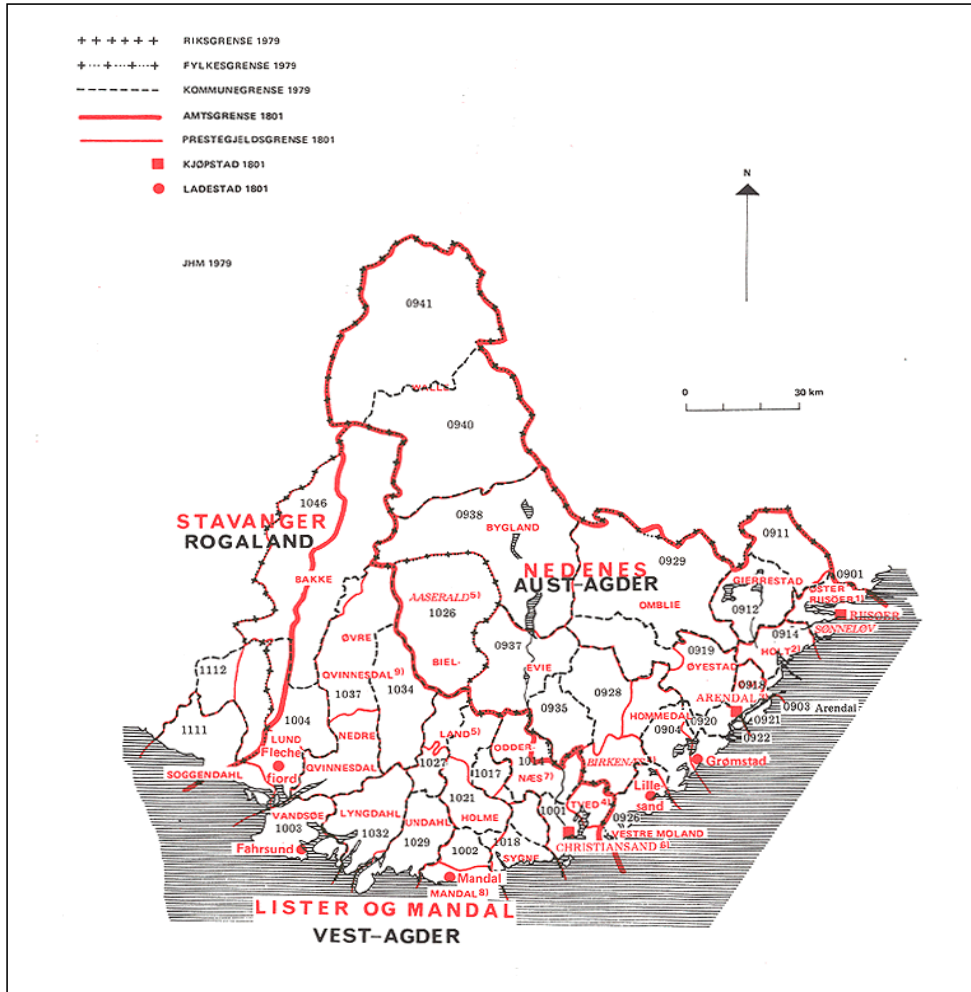
I was in a triangle of three cemeteries, and experiencing that places, people and events are connected, and that blurred faces on old photographs, frozen in time, and found in boxes in attics, may raise the disturbing question: who was I? Who were the people who migrated from Landvik and surrounding parishes in 1846, and started a new life on another continent? What motivated them to build their new homes on the prairie where the horizon is endless and the soil is deep – so different from their sheltered little home valley? What did become of them?

I want to know why.



Satellite-photo of present-day Grimstad Township and surrounding districts. Landvik (top) and Eide (bottom) Parishes are situated to left/ west in the highlighted area (yellow boundaries).

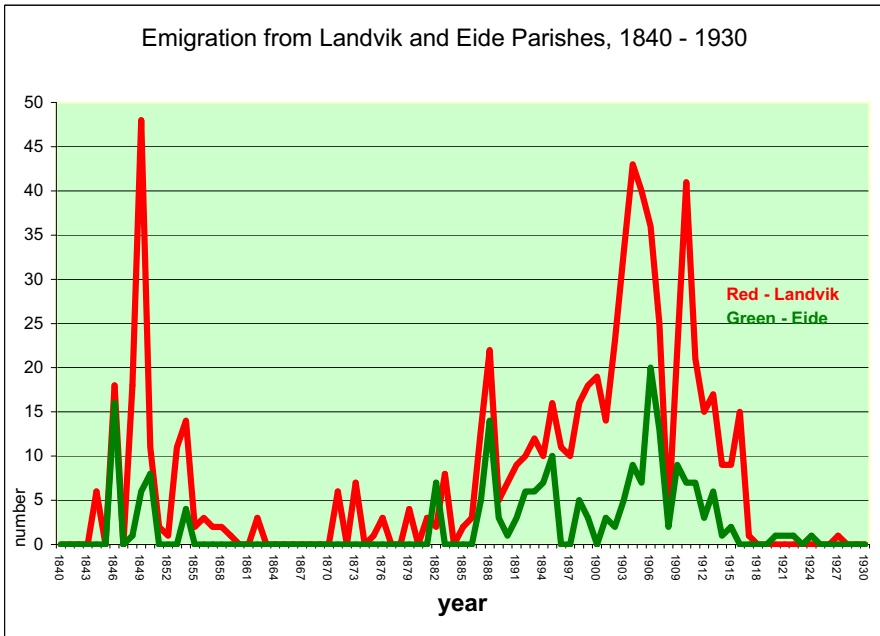
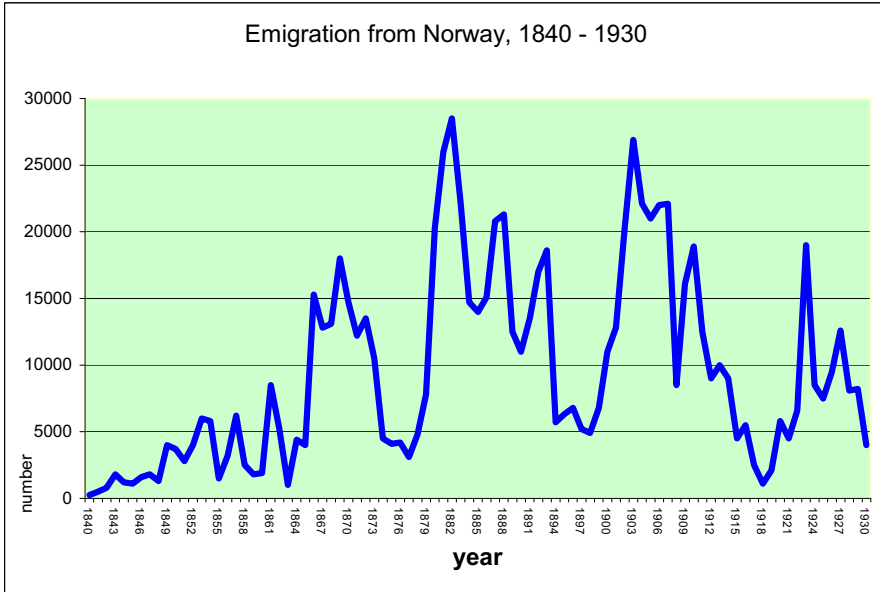
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Map of "Nedenes County" and "Lister og Mandal County", ca. 1800. Parish boundaries are marked in a thin red line. Numbers refer to modern "communes". "Grømstad" is an obsolete spelling for "Grimstad".

<http://digitalarkivet.uib.no/norkart/agder.htm>

INTRODUCTION



Sources: *Utvandrerliv*, Utvandrerhuset (Hamar, 1981) and *Part Four: Index, 1840 -1930*.

1.1 THE CONTEXT

The graphic representation on the preceding page shows the fluctuations in emigration from Norway to America, on a national and a local level. In many respects, local emigration from Landvik and Eide Parishes mirrors national movements, with crests in the emigration waves about 1885 and 1905. But there are at the same time striking differences.

After a considerable number of people had left their native parishes in the period 1845-1855, emigration from Nedenes County came to a rather abrupt stop in 1855, and the standstill lasted until the 1880s.

During the period 1856-1865 only 255 emigrants left the county, whereas corresponding figures from the period 1846-1855 show 2,480 emigrants.¹ This development has its local parallel: 131 persons emigrated from Landvik Parish between 1845 and 1855, and only nine persons went to America in the period 1856-1870. In the case of Eide Parish, 34 people emigrated in the years 1845-1855, but there are no records of emigration from this parish in the period from 1856 to 1880.² The *Index in Part Four* gives the details of officially recorded emigration from Hommedal Parish to America in the period 1840-1930. This survey serves as a frame and a backcloth for the more restricted story of emigration in 1846, and further into the 1850s.

The characteristics of mass-emigration in the period 1875-1900 are certainly different from those of the pioneering years before 1850. About mid-century, seafaring and related industries picked up an increasing momentum, and became in a short time the dominant and all-embracing industry. Shipping activities flourished, not only in the little port of Grimstad, but also in the surrounding rural parishes of Landvik, Eide and Fjære, where the demand for boards and planks in the shipyards coupled with a rich trade in provisions for the many ships in the district, and a satisfactory and even ample job market. Those were the golden years of the tall ships, a period when initiative and skill might readily amass wealth. It is small surprise that emigration to America became a less tempting option in such a situation.

It was, however, a precarious situation. In general, ownership in the local vessels was spread among many hands. Any captain would have an interest in the ship he commanded, and many small and land-bound share-holders gave the industry more than a hint of economic

¹ Helge Ove Tveiten. *En utvandring blusser opp – og slokner hen. Sørlandsk emigrasjon på 1800-tallet* (Major thesis, University of Oslo, 1974).

² Based on material from *Index in Part Four*.

democracy, but it was a vulnerable system with scanty access to the necessary amount of financial support. It was certainly a giant on clay feet.

As technical and economic development made the tall ships obsolete, they were replaced by faster steam-powered iron-ships, and it became evident that new times required a kind of ready capital not found in the old and small-scale and humanely sympathetic system. In addition, it might be argued that people on the southern coastline were too slow and too reluctant in adjusting to modern times.³

In recent years, Harry Jerome's theory of push and pull factors connected to business cycles and migration has received some well-founded criticism. Certainly, it seems to be an approach which is somewhat unbalanced in its insistence upon economic forces alone enticing migration.⁴ If the economic factors behind emigration are isolated, it seems that the central assumption must be that the emigrants possessed "total rationality and complete information". One must realize that "a number of both rational and irrational reasons contributed to the emigration decisions of individuals."⁵ It is, however, an approach which highlights the basic sides of the rather unique emigration which took place from Nedenes County in the latter part of the 19th century, and lasted well into the first years of the World War One.

In a wide perspective there is little reason to doubt Jerome's thesis as regards the general economic situation and its repercussions upon migration movements. The balance between pull and push factors may, however, be disturbed and economic factors must be supplemented by cultural, social, and religious influences. An example of a fairly clear-cut relationship between business cycles and emigration is found in *Sørlandet* during the crisis which followed the collapse of the tall-ship-industries. In Southern Norway economic conditions around 1880 literally pushed people out to find a livelihood across the seas. Their motivation to seek *The Promised Land* was in other words largely based upon massive unemployment in their local community, combined with the promises of America. For the individual emigrant his discontent and his expectations were really two sides of the same matter. In any case, the result was departure.

³ The downfall of the shipping industries on *Sørlandet* has been fully treated by Berit Eide Johnsen in *Rederstrategi i endringstid* (Kristiansand: Høyskoleforlaget, 2001).

It is tempting to see this as an early example of the much bespoken laid-back attitude of Norwegian Southerners; a native myself, I must profess that I have often wondered why we are so meek and humble and slanting towards *mañana*. But of course, this is a totally unfounded and unscientific observation.

⁴ Harry Jerome. *Migration and Business Cycles* (New York, NY: National Bureau of Statistical Research, 1927): 205-208.

⁵ Hans Norman and Harald Runblom. *Transatlantic Connections: Nordic Migration to the New World after 1800* (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1987): 112.

The central idea of the push and pull perspective seems to ignore the fact that people often move over shorter or longer distances. In other words, they are not residents in a static condition. Also, the approach does not deal with the influence on migration by personal contacts and social networks in migration systems. In summary, a decision to migrate is not a totally “individual affair nor a completely voluntary act, but often a collective and strongly conditioned or constrained decision”.⁶

Setting aside personal and group-inspired motivation for emigration, one might argue that the economic situation in *Sørlandet* in the mentioned period was founded on and dominated by larger and international factors. There is perhaps an unusually clear-cut parallel between the one-sided local economy and international business cycles. When the shipping industry collapsed, the economic repercussions hit nearly all spheres of life in the region. For a lot of people the consequence was unemployment, with small chances of finding alternative work. Also for the farmers in the district this meant hard times: they were not dependent upon paid jobs, but their agricultural products and timber from their forests were no longer in usual demand. For town people and rural population alike the prospect of emigrating became a realistic possibility, even necessity for supporting a family.

When emigration from Nedenes County resumed its course in the late 1870s, it soon became a massive wave which strongly influenced the sending communities, and in a long-term perspective changed the cultural and spiritual foundations among Norwegians on both sides of the Atlantic. Many of the motives for emigrating are of course the same for all Norwegian regions, but Nedenes County had a rhythm of its own, showing fluctuations which are unique. At the same time, the overall picture of emigration from *Sørlandet* falls into the larger category of European emigration to America – a mass movement involving nearly 33 million people, of which three million came from the Nordic countries. About 20% of those emigrants would later return to their country of origin.⁷

Official records from the Grimstad-area state that 2,377 people left for America in the period 1875-1900. The population in the four communities in 1890 was 3,172 in Grimstad,

⁶ Gunnar Malmberg. “Time and Space in International Migration”, Thomas Hammar, Grete Brockmann, Kristof Hamas and Thomas Faist. *International Migration, Immobility and Development* (Oxford/ New York: Berg Publishers Ltd., 1997): 29-30.

⁷ Hans Norman and Harald Runblom. *Transatlantic Connections: Nordic Migration to the New World after 1800*: 3.

4,971 in Fjære, 2,401 in Landvik, and 774 in Eide. During the same 25 years, the number of emigrants reached 1,438, 674, 195, and 70 respectively.⁸ A comparison with other districts in Norway, based on the number of emigrants pr. 1000 of mean population, shows that the southern districts – and Grimstad in particular - were as heavily affected as districts to the north, often regarded as the early, main emigration centres in Norway.

*Emigration per 1000 of median population; five-year-periods:*⁹

Location	1875-80	1881-85	1886-90	1891-95	1896-1900
Grimstad	1.8	20.5	34.0	23.7	17.5
Fjære	0	1.1	7.6	9.3	8.6
Landvik	0.5	0.9	4.3	4.6	6.4
Eide	0	1.8	5.9	8.4	2.1
Tinn	5.5	21.2	13.5	11.6	6.4
Ringsaker	7.6	19.3	8.4	5.4	-
Dovre	8.5	18.8	13.5	11.5	4.0
Norway	4.25	10.98	8.2	6.0	3.1

In those years, Grimstad served as an important stepping-stone for prospective emigrants, who had made the little harbour the starting point for the final leg to America. There was a steady flow of people coming from inner and rural communities, making the town their base for a time, and waiting for transport to the New World. The effect of the large number of people moving out was balanced by the influx of e.g. Swedish workers who took part in road-works and railroad constructions. At the crest of the wave, astonishing numbers of people crossed the Atlantic: in 1887, 53.2% of the population emigrated from Grimstad, and in the following year, Eide Parish saw 17.9% of its inhabitants leave for America.¹⁰

It is a striking feature of mass-emigration from *Sørlandet* that New York became the unquestioned and favourite destination.¹¹ In the years from 1885 to 1900, 1,740 emigrants from the Grimstad district named the metropolis as their end-goal, and in reality narrowed their choice even further by crossing the East River and settling in the Red Hook, Park Slope

⁸ Erik Aalvik Evensen. *Amerikabrevene* (Grimstad: Selskapet for Grimstad Bys Vel, 1996): 138.

⁹ Ibid.: 140. Additional information from Andres Svalestuen. *Tinns emigrasjonshistorie 1837 – 1907* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1972), and Arnfinn Engen, ed. *Utvandringa – det store oppbrotet* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1978).

¹⁰ Evensen, op.cit.: 141.

¹¹ See e.g. David C. Mauk. *The Colony that Rose from the Sea: The Norwegians in the Red Hook Section of Brooklyn, 1850-1910* (Doctoral dissertation, New York University, 1991).

and Bay Ridge areas in Brooklyn.¹² 85.6% of the emigrants from Grimstad headed for New York, 87.4% from Fjære Parish had made the same choice, as had 85.5% from Eide Parish. Landvik Parish is atypical in this connection: only 72.7% followed their neighbours to New York. On the other hand, Landvik Parish confirms its position as an agricultural area, and the vast majority of a continued migration to the Middle West came from this parish. It is important in this connection to note that in those 25 years only four local emigrants went on to Missouri and St. Joseph. Kansas was more of a magnet in the same period with 21 newcomers.¹³

The typical emigrant in the 1890s from the Grimstad area was an unemployed seaman, unmarried, 26 years old, on his way to New York on a ship from the *Thingvalla*-line – and quite possibly with a return to the native country in his mind. After the turn of the century, America developed into an extended job-market, where people worked as carpenters and day-workers in the docks for shorter periods, returned to Norway with well-earned dollars, and continued their repetitive voyages across the Atlantic for some years.¹⁴

It is therefore clear that emigration from the Grimstad-area falls into two distinct and different categories. As already mentioned, mass-emigration from the district near the turn of the century bears the mark of an extended job-market, made viable and even natural in the troublesome aftermath of the golden years of the tall ships. At the prospect of widespread unemployment, traditional attitudes along the coast, shaped by old shipping contacts with countries on the continent and in Britain, paved the way for an increasingly smooth transfer of labour.

For the emigration pioneers in the 1840s the situation was far more difficult. The communities along the southern coast had been hit hard by the war with England (1807-1814) and the ensuing blockade. The English men-of-war hindered effectively provisions from reaching Norway, and there are tragic stories of lone men trying desperately to row to Denmark in small boats in the hope of bringing back food for their families. In fact, 4-5,000 Norwegians were caught by the English Navy, and sent to prison in England.¹⁵

Even in the 1840s, the hardships of the war lingered, and the country was still groping to find its way back to what seemed more affluent and happy pre-war years. The golden years

¹² Evensen, op. cit.: 141.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.: 146.

¹⁵ www.digitalarkivet.uib.no/DaDoc/fa22001807.htm (Accessed July 25, 2007).

of the tall ships were only a dawning possibility for people with economic foresight, and the break-through of modern times had just started on a laborious process. In such a time, it would take both courage and stamina to decide on an action which at its core meant burning your bridges and in most cases leaving the fatherland for good.

Put simply and squarely, the goal of this dissertation is therefore to conduct an in-depth and comparative study of a limited number of related people (about 80 persons), and the motives and general background for their exodus from Hommedal Parish to America in 1846, to follow the destinies of the first two generations on American soil, and see if, how quickly, and to what extent they became assimilated or even “Americanized”. The scope of the project may be narrow, in time, space, and group-selection, but it gives the opportunity for a close and comparative scrutiny of migration movements in linked communities (even on an individual level) on either side of the Atlantic in a time of pioneering initiative.

In any research on early emigration, the first intriguing question is nearly always: what motivated the migrants to carry through such a decision? Or to use another term to summarize the causes of migration: what was their “migratory space”?

The development of local communities like Landvik and Eide Parishes is of course linked to broader national and even international changes. It has therefore been natural to adopt a structure in the first part of this project which reflects the inter-dependency between three concentric circles of interest (national – regional – local), or, on a parallel structure, the interplay of a macro-level, a meso-level, and a micro-level. A macro-survey of important 19th century political and social trends, especially in the rural population in Norway, is followed by a narrowing circle, focusing on the development of rural areas in particular in Nedenes County, and reaching a micro-level in a study of political, cultural, social and economic features in the Landvik and Eide sub-Parishes between 1800 and 1850. This detailed study is brought even further, highlighting the state of affairs on “emigrant-farms” in the 1840s. The background study is addressed in *Part One*, chapters IV-VI.

The 1846 exodus marks the beginning of the first phase of an amazing story of mass emigration from *Sørlandet* to America. Unlike people from the valleys and inner regions, people from the coastal area in the south were by tradition often open-minded travellers of the seas, having a long-established culture of commercial and social contacts with countries like Holland, France, Germany, England, and Denmark. Even so, their decision to migrate must

have been a difficult one to reach. It is true that pathfinders had reported back the wonders of the new world, but in the last analysis theirs was a journey into the unknown.

It is a main hypothesis in this work that the exodus from Hommedal Parish in 1846 was not the result solely of economic factors, not to mention international business cycles. It is of course true that economic considerations were at the base of the deliberations that went on in the early 1840s, and after all, it was an essential goal for the migrants to secure a future for their children. However, the decision to leave the native shores for good was of such a radical and brave nature that it is of paramount interest to establish the cultural and spiritual factors which helped bring about the dismantling of age-old traditions and cemented political and social bonds. In other words, emigration to America in 1846 was not a question of only arranging practical and personal affairs, raising money for the voyage, bracing oneself for the unknown, and exploiting favourable trade winds; it was a courageous act, defying the leading powers of the realm, and required both stamina and self-reliance to welcome modern times and take advantage of a new freedom. Although economic factors were certainly in the balance, so were feelings and even acts of opposition and outright animosity directed towards the dominant class of civil servants.¹⁶ It is consequently fair to assume that emigration from Hommedal Parish in 1846 was the result of the interaction of complex and multifaceted economic, cultural, social, spiritual, political, and personal motives. Such local factors are addressed in chapter VI. In addition, one should add the triggering role of Johan R. Reiersen, who was sponsored by the “well-read” men of Eide Parish, and whose *Pathfinder* certainly tipped the balance in favour of emigration. The activities of the two local pioneers, Johan R. Reiersen and his companion Elise Wærenskjold are discussed in *Part One*, chapter VII.

In one sense, the exodus in 1846 came as a result of the emergence of liberating forces in the old society. These new thoughts were of course brought to America as a form of cultural ballast among the emigrants. In the process of settling on American soil, the emigrants must have been influenced by their newly-won view-points, and the question arises to what extent the new settlement bore the characteristics of the old Norwegian culture, the rebellious culture of the 1840s, or the welcoming culture of the receiving country. These are

¹⁶ The emigrants of 1846 must have found themselves in a situation where two alternatives presented themselves. A geographical *exit* might be one form of expressed dissatisfaction, another would be *voice*, implying political expression and action in their home parish. Hirschmann’s classical concepts point of course to the variety of strategies available to potential migrants. In the case of the emigrants from Hommedal Parish, they very seldom vented their criticism openly, but let their act of migration be their voice, and also wrote out some frustrations in their letters from America. See also 12.1.

central questions in an assessment of the key concepts of integration and assimilation to be addressed throughout *Part Two*, and concluded on a more theoretical basis in chapter XII.

The pioneers of 1846 were nearly all members of the same clan or family. The *Igland* family and their home base in Landvik Parish was undoubtedly at the hub of what took place in the mid 1840s. The developments in agriculture, the gathering forces leading the country towards a modern society, and the growth of the population, had, however, already in the 1830s pushed sons and daughters away from their ancestral farm in search of a new livelihood. They had settled in the neighbouring parishes of Eide, Fjære, Birkenes, Herefoss, and Øyestad, but were in most respects satellites in the web revolving around Hommedal Parish, of which Landvik and Eide constituted the twin sub-parishes. It is both logical and natural that this dissertation is centred on Hommedal Parish, since this remained the foundation and the starting point of the pioneers' cultural and spiritual identity and aspirations. The role and function of the family and the cultural bonds holding the network or the group together then becomes another crucial factor behind the decision to emigrate. In Thomas Faist's model these are elements of the "meso-level", complementing and extending the traditional factors included in the so-called "macro-" and "micro-levels".¹⁷ The role of the family and social relations are treated in *Part One*, chapter III.

The title of this dissertation plays with the seemingly synonymous meaning of *Canaan* and *the Promised Land*. In a strict sense it is Eide Parish which carries the sobriquet *Canaan*. In this connection, the term is used, however, to signify the cluster of neighbouring parishes. They were mostly blessed with favourable natural conditions, not least as regards climate, but even so their resources became too restricted and unsatisfactory near the middle of the 19th century. They were also solidly planted in what is known as the Norwegian "Bible-belt". God-fearing and staunch, they ventured on a quest to find *the Promised Land*, attempting to break new ground for themselves and their children. But was their brave act in essence a circular journey? Was the strenuous expedition to Missouri in reality a move which brought them nowhere – from one tolerable life to another tolerable life? Were the expenses of such a nature that they spent the rest of their lives regretting the decision to migrate, and at the same time knowing that there was no return? Was it a destiny to be likened to Kristina's in Moberg's *Utvandrerne* – longing for the home country until her dying day, but at the same

¹⁷ Thomas Faist. "From Common Questions to Common Concepts" Thomas Hammar, Grete Brockmann, Kristof Tamas and Thomas Faist. *International Migration, Immobility and Development. Multidisciplinary Perspectives*: 247-276.

time accepting the situation and realizing that her children were better off in America? Or is it possible to demonstrate that their new life in America turned out to be the fulfilment of their aspirations and dreams for themselves and the next generation? In his first letter from America in 1848, Osul Enge hints at such initial conclusions:

*To me it really seems that this land was destined to be the home of men, which is not Norway. I should wish that the whole population in Norway were here, particularly the lowly part thereof, they did not have to lack food if only they could and would work a bit, and not so much. Here is room for everybody. I am not thinking of only this place, but around the country, though certainly if my property was cultivated and planted, it would feed the whole population in Eide Parish.*¹⁸

To answer these questions, it is necessary to conduct a comparative study of the sending and receiving communities, heeding Jon Gjerde's call for precisely such studies. In his excellent study of the Balestrand emigrants, he echoes the contention made by Frank Thistlethwaite and Birgitta Odén to take into consideration both the country of emigration and the country of immigration, thereby adopting a method that is "feasible only if individuals are followed from their places of birth to their places of death."¹⁹ The ideals presented by Frank Thistlethwaite in 1960, called for more studies that attempted to cover the whole migration experience, not just the European or American end of the story. He invited researchers to regard the Atlantic migrations as "a complete sequence of experiences whereby the individual moves from one social identity to another."²⁰ In accordance with this view, the migrants from Hommedal Parish are followed up to the moment they finally chose Missouri (*Part Two*, chapter VII), and further into the process of actual settlement (chapters IX, X, XI).

This is then the goal of *Part One*: in a broad perspective, what were the basic and motivating factors behind the decision to emigrate from Landvik, Eide and neighbouring parishes? The answer is certainly a complex one, and it seems natural to seek a structural model which meets this wish to take into account an array of possible approaches, and look beyond a logical, yet narrow push and pull perspective. Such a multidisciplinary approach, advocated by Thomas Faist, is presented later in this introduction.

¹⁸ Osul (Enge) Nelson, 1848, *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 1

¹⁹ Jon Gjerde. *From Peasants to Farmers: The Migration from Balestrand, Norway, to the Upper Middle West* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 1.

²⁰ Birgitta Odén. "Ekonomiska emigrationsmodeller och historisk forskning: Ett diskussionsinlägg" *Scandia* (1971):1-70; and Frank Thistlethwaite. "Migration from Europe Overseas in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" *XIe. Congrès International des Sciences Historiques. Rapports V: Histoire Contemporaine* (Stockholm, 1960): 32-60.

In *Part Two*, the aim is to follow the company to their settlement in St. Joseph, Missouri, and about ten years later to an alternative “daughter colony” in Doniphan County, Kansas. As the two settlements struck roots, it became evident that two men established themselves as heads of the two communities: Peder Nelson (Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven) in Missouri, and his cousin Osul Nelson (Osul Nielsen Enge) in Kansas. Their lives serve as exemplars of the rest of the migrants, and together with the exploits of N.O. Nelson from the second generation three case studies explore in some detail the destinies of these exceptional men.

What were their motives to seek a new life on the frontier? Did the lure of American freedom and prosperity pull them? What kind of society did they establish in Missouri and Kansas? Was it a replica of old Landvik and Eide Parishes? Were their traditional ways simply transplanted into American soil? Did they willingly and eagerly go through a process of integration and assimilation? Did they soon become Americanized? What kind of identity did they retain or develop? Was it possible for such a small company to preserve their Norwegian ways, or were they simply swallowed by the surrounding American culture? How does the first generation, the pioneers, compare with the second generation, their children? This is a handful of the questions which form the nucleus and concluding remarks of chapter XII in *Part Two*. As mentioned, in this chapter the main interest is directed towards the central concepts of integration and assimilation, but also the broader issues of identity and ethnicity. The concept of the so-called meso-level plays an important role in the discussion of the cultural factors which helped bring about the downfall of the old order and opened the way to emigration. It has been a rewarding viewpoint also to bring this concept to bear on the factors at work in the actual settlement in Missouri and Kansas. It is likely that the assets found in the tightly-woven family-group in Hommedal Parish, facilitated the transfer into American soil. The smooth transfer to American ways and methods in farming is logically linked to the immigrants’ education and reading and their experience with political and social issues in the home country. Their cultural and intellectual ballast had in other words an important function in both the process of breaking loose from their home parish, and settling in the New World.

The Norwegians in St. Joseph never became part of the Norwegian-American sub-culture which flourished in the Midwest between the Civil War and World War II. Even from the beginning they were largely isolated from other Norwegian settlements, and apart from some few strays, they received no reinforcements from Norway after 1855. To be sure, in the

late 1870s and 1880s a fair number of Norwegians and some Swedes and Danes settled in North-Eastern Kansas and South-Eastern Nebraska. Many of these late-coming Scandinavians drifted towards the area closer to St. Joseph, and were happy to find people there who understood their language. They occasionally took jobs as farm-hands or hired girls with the older settlers, or otherwise temporarily associated themselves with them. But they never really made an integral part of the group which had come before the Civil War and was already well on the way to complete cultural assimilation.

1.2 ON A DIFFERENT COURSE

In September 1846 a company of about 80 people left their native grounds in Landvik and surrounding parishes in Southern Norway, crossed the North Sea with difficulty, spent two weeks in France, and finally reached New Orleans on board the *Izette*. Three years earlier, Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven, Osul Nielsen Enge, and Anders Nielsen Holthe had sponsored the well-known editor Johan R. Reiersen on a scouting expedition to America. On his return, Reiersen published *The Pathfinder*, and reported to his sponsors in Eide Parish that ample opportunities were waiting for them in America. Reiersen himself gathered his family, and they eventually founded a colony in *Three-Mile-Prairie* in Texas. Anxious to extend and solidify his settlement, Reiersen eagerly waited for the arrival of the good men of Hommedal Parish, but had to accept the bitter disappointment that the farmers and their families had decided on a different course, not even informing him about their change of plans.

After a two-month stay in the Mississippi estuary, the immigrants proceeded on a riverboat to St. Louis, found new transportation there, and the *Old Hickory* brought them to the *Roubidoux Landing* in St. Joseph, Missouri. They landed in this new town on the frontier in April, 1847. Twelve people had died in New Orleans, and when others had travelled north to Wisconsin,²¹ the Missouri-group was reduced to about 50 people. At that time they were probably the only Norwegians in Missouri. Cleng Peerson had led a group of settlers to Shelby County not far from Hannibal in 1837, but the settlement proved to be a short-lived disaster, although some of the pioneers praised the beauty of the landscape before they left for better locations.²²

²¹ Robert A. Bjerke has published several books and articles on the Manitowoc settlement, e.g. *Manitowoc-skogen: a biographical and genealogical directory of the residents of Norwegian birth and descent in Manitowoc and Kewaunee counties in Wisconsin from the first settlement to 1900* (Manitowoc, WI: Dobbs, 1994).

²² “No other Norwegian settlement had a better appearance or a better location”. Quoted in: “Knud Anderson Slovig”, <http://wheelerfolk.org/norweb/knudpage.htm> (Accessed August, 2007).

There are several unanswered questions connected to the turn of events in 1847. Why did the immigrants fail to join Johan R. Reiersen in Texas? Were there unknown tensions between the pathfinder and his sponsors? Why did they fail to inform him about their new course? Why did the settlers choose to travel to Missouri? Had events in New Orleans swayed their conviction and Missouri was to be preferred? Did Peder Nelson have a sort of hidden agenda, taking his fellows to a place where he had an unknown friend, a Dane who had been expelled from the Danish Court? It is definitely difficult to find clear-cut and well-founded answers to these questions, but a family tradition and circumstantial evidence are available and shall be used in *Part Two*, chapter VIII.

In Buchanan County they claimed or bought land, established a closely-knit community, but in the late 1850s many of the company moved from Missouri (a slave state) across the Missouri River into Kansas (a free state) in search of cheaper and better land. The move to Kansas raises another question: was the lure of cheap land the only reason for leaving St. Joseph? The letters from the pioneers contain passages which give the impression that certain feelings of bitterness and disappointment existed between Peder Nelson and Osul Nelson; was Osul Nelson's move to Kansas also motivated by his opposition to slavery?

The great majority of Norwegian settlers were opposed to slavery; Peder Nelson owned eight slaves. In family tradition he is pictured as a benign master who bought and held slaves because it was deemed necessary and customary in his district. But did the question of slavery contribute in souring the relations between the cousins? Again, circumstantial evidence might suggest an answer in *Part Two*, chapters IX and X.

Letters from the pioneers have been collected and translated into English. Both Norwegian originals and their translations constitute an authentic backcloth, and are a great source of information of daily life in the settlements up till about 1870. The annotated letters are included in *Part Three*.

In the late 1840s the settlement in St. Joseph was perhaps one of the most successful colonies between Texas and Wisconsin. It prospered in a modest way, the first generation pioneers were in a position to give land away to their children, and they may have seen their expectations and hopes fulfilled. They were certainly afflicted by death and diseases, but none of the original 52 settlers returned to Norway. They had made their choice, and became American citizens as soon as the law permitted them to take the oath. A major goal of this dissertation is to delve deeper into the destinies of the first two generations of settlers, and weigh their possible "success".

They had taken a route different from most other Norwegian settlers. It is perhaps one of the striking characteristics of the group from Hommedal Parish that they reached decisions and embarked upon courses marked by individualistic preferences, and thereby setting themselves apart from the mighty flow of settlers who stuck to a course to the north and west.

Awareness of the very existence of a relatively large group of Norwegians in Missouri quickly faded among their countrymen on both sides of the Atlantic. Those immigration historians who have noticed it at all, have usually dismissed it in passing as a curious aberration from the main pattern of settlement, and of little relevance to the larger story. Nevertheless, the people of the St. Joseph settlement were deeply involved in an interplay of individuals and movements which in the 1840s and 1850s were transforming Norwegian emigration from a haphazard and disorganized affair into a more orderly movement.

1.3 A SERIES OF LIMITATIONS

The study of the exodus of emigrants from Hommedal and neighbouring parishes in 1846 and the following decade is characterized by a series of limitations compared to many other works on Norwegian migration.

In the first place, we are dealing with a very restricted number of emigrants from a little cluster of parishes in Southern Norway. The group of pioneers consisted originally of 79 people, and by the time they reached St. Joseph the company had dwindled to about 50 people. A number of new immigrants followed in 1849 and the first part of the 1850s, but the flow dried out in 1855. The Census Returns of 1850 state that there were 155 Norwegians in Missouri, and the number of Norwegian settlers showed little growth in the following decades. One of the implications is that we have a meagre basis for statistical comparisons. It is therefore difficult to follow for instance Jon Gjerde and Robert Ostergren in their respective studies of Balestrand and Rättvik,²³ simply because they had at their disposal a larger group of people who were part of a prolonged and continuous movement from Norway or Sweden to America. By contrast, the migration from Hommedal Parish to Missouri/ Kansas was short-lived and interrupted. In a longer perspective, the study of migration from this district is complicated because of two basic shifts in character: when emigration resumed its course around 1880, it was tied to the crisis in the shipping industries, and the typical migrant was no longer a peasant dreaming of ample and cheap land, but an unemployed seaman desperate to

²³ Robert C. Ostergren. *A Community Transplanted: The Trans-Atlantic Experience of a Swedish Immigrant Settlement in the Upper Middle West, 1835-1915* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

secure a livelihood to support himself and possibly a family. Secondly, there was also a marked difference in the choice of destination. The pioneers chose the Mid-West because they were basically peasants who had deep ties to the cultivation of the soil, while the unemployed seamen and hopeful young women of the 1880s went to Brooklyn to find jobs as dockworkers, carpenters, day-workers or house-maids.

Also, this study moves in a restricted circle of time and space. It deals with the pioneers of 1846, their children, and ends with the death of the central leaders of the first generation around 1885. Once they had settled in Buchanan County, Missouri, the immigrants from Hommedal Parish only allowed themselves to move to a second location. This happened in the late 1850s when Osul Nelson established himself as an unofficial leader of the group of Norwegians who crossed the Missouri and founded a daughter colony in *East Norway*, Doniphan County, Kansas. Their children were surprisingly loyal to this bifurcation: there are only a very few examples of them moving further out - to Nebraska and St. Louis. Generally speaking, about 25% of Norwegian immigrants would return to their native country after some time. This is not the case with the settlers in Missouri and Kansas. In fact, none of the first generation of pioneers returned home, except for some short and rare visits.

Lastly, the limitations apply to occupations and family connections. The core of the pioneer group consisted of peasants accompanied by their families, one shoemaker with a family, one or two farm-maids, and some few bachelors who were either sons on farms or employed as farm-workers. Essentially, they were all part of - or closely connected to - the powerful *Iglan* tribe, cultivators of the soil and pillars of culture and religion in Landvik Parish since the 16th century.

1.4 A MODEST PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF NORWEGIAN EMIGRATION

In July, 1825, the *Restauration* sailed from Stavanger, carrying emigrants mostly from the Quaker and Haugean flocks. In the fall, the first Norwegian settlement was founded at Kendall, New York. In 1833, Cleng Peerson broke out from this colony, headed west, and found his way to Fox River in Illinois. During the following year most of the settlers in Kendall followed his example and made their way to Illinois. From Fox River, Gjert Hovland wrote home, describing the vast prairies, and praising both religious and economic freedom. You must come to America, he concluded, here is room for all of you.

It took ten years before any new additions to the Norwegian settlements arrived in the New World. In 1836, two ships crossed the Atlantic, bringing over emigrants from Rogaland and Hordaland on the West coast. In the next decade information and rumours from America spread to new communities, and new flocks of peasants prepared their voyage from Sogn and Voss, Valdres and Hallingdal, from Numedal and Telemark, and eventually, in the mid 1840s, from Nedenes County.

Many of these new immigrants came to Fox River, but soon conditions became cramped in this settlement, and new locations were sought out, bringing the Norwegians further and further west and northwest: from Illinois into Wisconsin, where Koskonong became a centre for the move towards the west. In a new move, combined with the easy access from the port in Quebec, an important settlement was founded at Blue Mounds, and was fairly soon followed by thrusts into Minnesota and the Dakotas. In Norway, letters from locations like Rochester, Sugar Creek, Jefferson Prairie, Rock Prairie, and Muskego nurtured the imagination, and fuelled the desires to experience the wonders of America.

Parallel to this concentrated and heavy movement through the northern states, there existed a side-stream of a far more modest character. It was a route which had been tried out by Johan R. Reiersen, brought emigrants to New Orleans, and if they followed Reiersen's advice, led them to his settlement in Texas. The Texas settlement was, according to the same Reiersen, the ideal location for Norwegians, both for the sake of good soil and temperate climate. Much to his disappointment, fairly few immigrants followed his call: the Census Returns for 1860 recorded only 326 Norwegians in the state. (By the same year, more than 21,400 Norwegians had settled in Wisconsin). The reasons why Norwegians preferred the northern states may be obscure. It seems, however, reasonable to assume that once the movement had started along the western and northern route, immigrants felt assured and safe in following in the footsteps of compatriots, not to say acquaintances and even family. Theodore C. Blegen adds another reason: the vast majority of Norwegian settlers were aghast at the institution of slavery, and consequently kept away from the South.²⁴ Also, there was the element of availability of maritime opportunities. Very soon after the opening years of emigration from Norway, New York and Quebec established themselves as the main destinations, very much leaving New Orleans because of rumours of diseases and bad climate.

²⁴ Theodore C. Blegen. *Norwegian Migration to America, 1825-1860* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1931): 186.

Pioneer migrants fulfil an important role. The early immigrants would tend to follow in the footsteps of the pioneer migrants. In one sense, this is what the people from Hommedal Parish did, or perhaps intended to do. The case is that they took Reiersen's advice only half-way, and struck another course after having landed in New Orleans. What is certain, however, is that Reiersen provided them and other migrants with valuable information and thereby heightened the knowledge about advantages and disadvantages of certain locations in America. Thomas Faist has pointed to the importance of information in the development of chain migration. "Past migration accelerates further decisions to emigrate because it increases the level of information for later migrants which in turn reduces the risks associated with a decision to migrate. As a consequence, chain migration is likely to develop."²⁵ The situation with emigrants from Hommedal Parish is complex, since the history of migration from this Parish falls into two fairly distinct periods: an initial phase when peasants chose the Middle West as their destination, and the mass-emigration round the turn of the century which brought especially large numbers of unemployed seamen to New York and Brooklyn. One may well argue that in any case the pioneers had paved the ground for later migration, although the actual destination had shifted.

Since the end of the 19th century research into the fates of the Norwegian settlers in the northern states has been both prolific and continuous. Respected scholars on both sides of the Atlantic have produced volumes of migration history, recording in full the history of the main movements of Norwegian immigration. It is, however, a striking feature that hardly any of these standard works on Norwegian settlements pay any attention to the colonies in St. Joseph, Missouri and *East Norway*, Kansas. In truth, the brave farmers from Hommedal Parish are largely ignored by historians, despite the rather unique character of their endeavour. It is, of course, an important objective in this dissertation to render these pioneers a well-earned, though modest place in the history of Norwegian immigration to America.

In a process of compiling information about the settlements in Missouri and Kansas, it soon becomes clear that such information is hard to find. Theodore C. Blegen, Odd S. Lovoll, Ingrid Semmingsen, Carlton C. Qualey, George T. Flom, and Rasmus B. Anderson²⁶ all pass over the 1840s without any comment on those settlers to the south. It is only Martin Ulvestad in his massive books on Norwegian immigrants who devotes a flimsy paragraph to Peder Kalvehaven and his followers:

²⁵ Faist, op. cit.: 265.

²⁶ See bibliography for titles.

*Nor in this state [Missouri] have the Norwegians easily gained a footing. ... and then there was this man by the name of Kalvehaven (from the vicinity of Arendal), who settled in the northern part of the state in the 40s. He had a lot of land, kept many black slaves, and was very wealthy, but during the Civil War the slaves ran away from him. It is not known how he fared after that.*²⁷

As mentioned, the emigration from Hommedal Parish attracted little attention among scholars. Broadly speaking, there is only one exception to this general observation: Helge Ove Tveiten's major thesis from 1974 dealing with emigration from Nedenes County in the 19th century.²⁸ Tveiten has demonstrated the close connection between the rise and fall of the shipping industry and fluctuations in emigration from *Sørlandet*, and has made a close study of the role of the socialist "Thrane movement" in the course of emigration. He mentions some of the leading men in the group from Hommedal Parish, and has also indicated the crucial part played by the Igland-family in their exodus. His thesis was written under the guidance of Ingrid Semmingsen, who in the same period supervised the working out of other notable contributions to the history of Norwegian emigration, e.g. theses by Arnfinn Engen and Andres Svalestuen.²⁹

1.5 UPROOTED OR TRANSPLANTED?

Since the 1950s, Oscar Handlin's book *The Uprooted* has played the role of a standard and much admired work on migration. It met with some critical voices after its publication, in many cases because it seemed to be centred on the experiences of Southern Europeans in the big cities in the United States, but it was not until the 1980s that a new generation of scholars challenged Handlin on the basis of his rather tragic view of immigration, and substituted his theme of "uprootedness" with the idea of "transplanted villages". Handlin writes in his introduction:

²⁷ Martin Ulvestad. *Nordmændene i Amerika: Deres Historie og Rekord, Vol. I* (Minneapolis, MI: privately published, 1906): 197. My translation. Ulvestad goes on to describe the unsuccessful attempts made to settle in Missouri, but then praises the important achievements made by Nels Olaus (N.O.) Nelson as an industrialist and philanthropist in St. Louis. Nels Olaus was 3 years old when he came with his father to St. Joseph in 1847.

²⁸ Helge Ove Tveiten. *En utvandring blusser opp – og slokner hen: Sørlandsk emigrasjon på 1800-tallet* (Major thesis, University of Oslo, 1974).

²⁹ Arnfinn Engen. *Oppbrot og omlegging. Utvandring og økonomisk utvikling i Dovre på 1800-talet* (Major thesis, University of Oslo, 1973); Andres Svalestuen. *Tinns emigrasjonshistorie 1837-1907: En undersøkelse med særlig vekt på den demografiske, økonomiske og sosiale bakgrunn for Amerikafarten, og en statistisk analyse av selve utvandringen* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1972).

*My theme is emigration as the central experience of a great many human beings. I shall touch upon broken homes, interruptions of a family life, separation from known surroundings, the becoming a foreigner and ceasing to belong. These are the aspects of alienation; and seen from the perspective of the individual received rather than of the receiving society, the history of immigration is a history of alienation and its consequences. ...The immigrants lived in crisis because they were uprooted.*³⁰

Whereas Handlin maintains that the immigrants lived in an extreme situation, fighting a life-long struggle to shake off memories and traditions from the Old World, younger researchers have tried to adopt a more positive outlook, seeing the possibility to mix two cultures, and establish different degrees of “transplantation” of the old community in a new soil.

In sharp contrast to Oscar Handlin, John Bodnar has described the immigrants’ experience as one of maintained links to Europe.³¹ In Bodnar’s view, most immigrants who were “transplanted” to America after 1830 were children of capitalism. He sees these people as products of an economic system which penetrated their homelands in Europe in the 19th century. Emigration to America was not, in Bodnar’s view, a flight of poor peasants from underdeveloped regions. Their migration was not only the result of the opportunities offered by an expanding American economy, but depended on transformations in their homelands as well. The same capitalism which altered the economic landscape of the United States, also influenced social and economic developments in Europe. Therefore, the immigrant did not meet capitalism for the first time in America: a nascent capitalism had made itself felt in their home country prior to their departure. Although Bodnar is mostly occupied with the situation in the urban centres in the United States, his demonstration that two manifestations of capitalism precipitated emigration, also has bearing on rural Norway. In Hommedal Parish, as elsewhere, manufactured goods began to appear in the 1840s, and the introduction of a commercial agriculture had begun. In 1846, a new era was in fact dawning: new means of communication would soon be introduced, cash crops would supplement the traditional cash income from forestry, and the closeness to markets would be an important asset to a local community.

³⁰ Oscar Handlin. *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown & Co., 1951): 4.

³¹ John Bodnar. *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985).

Robert C. Ostergren was one of the first scholars to make use of the metaphor of transplantation in his study and comparison of Rättvik Parish in Dalarna in mid-Sweden and the Isanti community in South-Eastern Minnesota. The two areas were connected by an axis of migration that lasted well into the 20th century. The chain migrations brought a large number of people from small districts in Sweden and placed them in homogeneous settlements in the Mid-West. In Ostergren's own words,

*[t]he study is essentially an examination of the binding together of two places on opposite sides of the Atlantic. It seeks to understand how chain migration linked the fortunes of these two places over a finite period of time, ... its basic thesis is that the discrete axes of migration and communication that were frequently established and maintained between places on either side of the Atlantic were the conduits for a prolonged series of back and forth impulses between places that both reflected and inspired change in each.*³²

Structurally, Ostergren follows his migrants through four “temporal stages”: a pre-migration stage which sets the potentials for emigration, a second stage in which information from the receiving area stimulates emigration of a selected group of individuals, and a third stage in which the sending community adjusts to the new conditions and the loss of the migrant group, considers the flow of information from overseas, and may initiate a second migration. The final stage is one of “consolidation, equilibrium, and redefinition”, in other words, a period devoted to maintaining a cultural Swedish identity, or a process of possible assimilation in the United States, and an assessment of what happened in the society left behind.³³

Emigration from Rättvik Parish is in most respects parallel to the general phenomenon of European migration. It is true that the process started later than for instance in Norway, but it was motivated by a lack of land resources and a growing population, crop failures in the late 1860s, and possibly religious persecution of groups outside the state church. On the “pull” side, the prospect of abundant and cheap land in the United States, political and religious freedom, and the support of kith and kin embarking on the same brave journey, tipped the balance in favour of departure. The Rättvik-Isanti experience is, however, special in the sense that the relative isolation on the frontier, combined with a large number of countrymen, helped establish a cultural insulation and a transplantation of important sides of the home

³² Ostergren, op. cit.: 24.

³³ Ibid.: 25.

society within the basic spheres of language, school, and church. Ostergren has also pointed to an interesting difference between Swedish and American farmers. The use of the land could be regarded from two points-of-view: either as an economic asset which could be sold at a profit, or as a “giver of life”, to be passed on to future generations. The Rättvik people followed their tradition of passing on their landed wealth to their heirs prior to death. The Americans, on the other side, were inclined to show individualistic attitudes; everybody was expected to be the architect of one’s own life.

Ostergren is reluctant to call the Rättvik migration a transplantation.

At best it was a partial transplantation, a brief emergence of something that resembled in certain ways the organism from which it came. It is but one type among the many associated with the general phenomenon of European immigration and settlement in North America. ... Nonetheless, the Rättvi-Isanti experience must be recognized as a somewhat exceptional example of the type, mainly because of its size.

It should then be noted that the Rättvik emigration totalled ca. 980 people in the period 1864-1889.³⁴

Walter D. Kamphoefner’s study of the Westfalians in Missouri is of special interest in the context of this project.³⁵ His objective is also one of “transplanted villages”, more specifically the German settlements in St. Charles and Warren Counties on the Missouri. German immigration to Missouri was early and heavy. The area in which the Westfalians settled had been made the subject of well-known promotional literature: Gottfried Duden’s *Report* from the late 1820s. Duden praised the wonders and possibilities of the region, thereby opening the door for a large influx of German settlers. By 1860, more than 38,000 Germans had found a new home in the lower Missouri River Valley.³⁶

Kamphoefner has clearly demonstrated the connection between the mass migration from Westfalia and the socioeconomic structure of the sending region. For many of the peasants in the area, supplementary work in the rural linen industry had been of prime importance. In the 1830s and 1840s this source of additional income began to dry up, and

³⁴ Ibid.: 152-153.

³⁵ Walter D. Kamphoefner. *The Westfalians. From Germany to Missouri* (Princeton, MA: Princeton University Press, 1987).

³⁶ “Gottfried Duden”, www.rootsweb.com/~moboohns.htm and www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAEgermany (Accessed June 12, 2007).

according to Kamphoefner, the large class of “dependent tenant farmers ... had no place to go but overseas.”³⁷

The image of German settlement that emerges from Kamphoefner’s study is a complex one. On the one hand, the Germans adjusted rather quickly to the new conditions in America. Mainly, they adopted American crops and farming techniques, thereby suggesting that they were in personal contact with American farmers and learned from them. But the contact seems to have been of a limited character at least for the first two generations of settlers. Generally, Germans were opposed to slavery, and did not venture into the culture of growing tobacco. But when it came to more personal contacts, the Germans seemed to keep a distance from other nationalities, in their families and in their churches. They did not tarry long to build and run parochial schools, an arrangement which helped preserve their German language and a strong group cohesiveness and consciousness.³⁸

In his excellent study of emigration from Balestrand on the Norwegian West Coast to the Middle West, Jon Gjerde has answered the call for other comparative studies, establishing the reasons and the motivation behind the exodus of a large number of people, and unveiling a string of settlements in Wisconsin and the Dakotas, founded on family bonds, cultural affinity, and religious orientation.³⁹ In this broad study, Gjerde even maintains that the move to America tended to increase the importance of the nuclear family. The scarcity and rising cost of labour brought the immigrants into a situation in which the family became the optimal unit of production.⁴⁰

In his conclusion, Gjerde states that the very act of moving abroad permitted the emigrants from Balestrand to “retain the essential social fabric of their community in a rural environment that was very much more conducive to economic growth than Balestrand.”⁴¹ In this manner, he finds support in Ingrid Semmingsen’s view that the early peasant emigrants would in an ironical way venture upon a radical enterprise to preserve essential features of home in America. A common feature for nearly all migrant pioneers was their desire to acquire land in the hope of securing a better future for their offspring. The Balestrand emigrants sought to create a more certain existence, and hoped to be able to “provide ample

³⁷ Kamphoefner, op. cit.: 9.

³⁸ Ibid.: 133-134.

³⁹ Jon Gjerde. *From Peasants to Farmers. The Migration from Balestrand, Norway, to the Middle Upper West.*

⁴⁰ Ibid.: 138.

⁴¹ Ibid.: 239.

inheritances for their children.”⁴² In their process of settlement, they took decisive steps in the direction of becoming part of a growing American middle class, socially and economically enhancing their status from peasants to farmers.

The Isanti and Norway Grove settlements also put into perspective the relations between ethnic groups in areas where people of many national origins met. It seems that in colonies where one ethnic group had arrived early and claimed land, this group tended to consolidate its position by purchasing land from others. In his study of Norwegian settlers in Wisconsin, Peter A. Munch has made a distinction between two different types of growth of settlements: *intensive* and *extensive* growth.⁴³ The intensive growth brought with it an increased colonization of the settlement. In the case of Wisconsin settlements, it led to a concentrated influx of Norwegians who deterred other ethnic groups from settling. On the other hand, an extensive growth of the colony would lead to expansion into other and generally neighbouring districts, and also to a wider contact with other ethnic groups than was allowed in the “mother colony”.

There are clear parallels between case studies of concentrated immigrant communities of Norwegian, Swedish, and German origin. These colonies in Wisconsin, Minnesota, the Dakotas, and Missouri have in common an element of so-called “positive selectivity of migration” (in general, fairly well-educated and land-owning migrants). They had a farm as their ultimate destination, and they were conservative in the sense that they wanted to preserve vital elements of their original religious, cultural, and social life. They tended to follow in the footsteps of the pathfinders, clustering in homogeneous communities, and often excluding other nationalities from their close-knit bastions. Of the Swedish immigrants from Rättvik Parish, over 45% eventually settled in Isanti County. Nearly 70% of the county population was of Swedish stock, and one third of that stemmed from Rättvik and a neighbouring parish. Gjerde’s study reveals an even stronger concentration. During the first decade of immigration, more than 200 people from Balestrand settled in Norway Grove, Wisconsin. They came from a parish consisting of about 2000 inhabitants. In the two immigrant churches, the Balestrandians made up 25% of the membership, and combined with people from the rest of the Sogn region, they represented 70%.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Peter A. Munch. “Segregation and Assimilation of Norwegian Settlements in Wisconsin” *Norwegian-American Studies and Records* 18 (1954): 102-140.

The homogeneity and cohesiveness of these concentrated colonies rested in many respects on their actual size. It took a considerable number of settlers of the same origin to secure a stable and lasting ethnic environment. Such a situation hardly existed in Buchanan County, Missouri, or Doniphan County, Kansas, where people from the “Landvik-group” remained a small minority, and had to choose a different course in relation to assimilation and ethnicity compared to that of major Norwegian, Swedish, and German settlements to the north, west, and east.

In recent years, Rasmus Sunde has also followed the invitation to see migration as a two-sided issue, and made Vik in Sogn his point of departure.⁴⁴ Sunde’s goal is to give a comprehensive analysis of the total emigration from Vik to Long Prairie in Boone County, Illinois in the period 1839-1964. His demographic and comparative study in the end comprises 12,700 names in the data-base, giving him the opportunity to draw conclusions regarding issues like mortality, marriage patterns, fertility, and birth rates.

Following the tradition of other comparative studies, Sunde has given valuable interpretations of the cultural differences which appear in a process of integration and assimilation. In many ways the immigrants from Vik held on to their traditions from the home country in their new life on the prairie, in the 1840s and 1850s giving their children typical Norwegian names, sending them to Norwegian schools, and on the whole retaining a pattern of intermarriage between immigrants of Norwegian origin. He finds reason to repeat Lowry Nelson’s statement that intermarriage represents the final test of assimilation.⁴⁵

The Long Prairie settlement is then another homogeneous immigrant society, generally consisting of conservative farmers with Republican sympathies, and a way of life governed by rather strict religious attitudes. In the early phase, lasting into the last decades of the 19th century, they experienced material progress, adapting to their new environment, but at the same time holding on to their cultural ballast. In many ways they founded a “Norwegian” community on the prairie with their own church, school, language, and a distinct tradition.⁴⁶

Both works by Gjerde and Sunde are definitely sources of inspiration for continued research into Norwegian migration, and give the opportunity for a comparison between the

⁴⁴ Rasmus Sunde. *Vikjer ved fjorden – vikjer på prærien: Ein komparativ studie med utgangspunkt i Vik i Sogn* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Bergen, 2001).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*: 266.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*: 269.

West Coast and the South Coast. It should also be mentioned that other scholars based on the West Coast have made valuable studies of emigration to America. One good example is the collection of articles edited by Ståle Dyrvik and Nils Kolle, emanating from a seminar at Voss in 1986.⁴⁷

Another westerner, Nils Olav Østrem, has used Skjold Parish as his basis.⁴⁸ In his dissertation, Østrem points to the importance of “culture” in a wide sense as a motivating force behind emigration. The individual emigrant who took part in the mass emigration to America did so in a cultural context, but it was his own choice which lay behind the ultimate decision to break away and depart. Emigration is therefore basically connected to human choices. Instead of focusing solely upon the economic and impersonal structures behind emigration, Østrem states that his aim is to replace economy with culture in his interpretation of the history of migration. His approach is to find the motives held by individual emigrants from Skjold Parish, and to answer the key question: “why did people emigrate from the parish?”

Covering the period from 1837-1914, Østrem seeks to construct “life stories”, placing the individual emigrant at the centre of interest. They are given a personality through their narratives. The immigrants from Skjold Parish did not, however, represent a kind of “transplanted village”, but were spread over several townships in Illinois, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Iowa.

The individual approach advocated by Østrem must contain a mental, “software” part which underlines the importance of psychology, human choices, and the cultural background of the emigrant, and at the same time taking into consideration “hardware” information connected to economic and social structures. In fact, neither religion, nor family networks, nor “their readiness to move” may cut out economic factors as a contributing force behind emigration.⁴⁹ In the last analysis, however, Østrem maintains that a basic, underlying cultural disposition governed the match between the many actors in the play about migration motives.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ståle Dyrvik and Nils Kolle, eds. *Eit blidare tilvære? Drivkrefter og motiv i den tidlegaste utvandringa frå Hordaland og Sogn og Fjordane* (Voss: Voss Folkemuseum, 1986).

⁴⁸ Nils Olav Østrem. *Utvandrarkultur. Ei migrasjonshistorisk undersøkjing av Skjold prestegjeld 1837-1914* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Tromsø, 2002).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*: 438.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*: 449.

Østrem's insistence that that a cultural disposition had paved the way and opened the possibilities of founding a new life on another continent tallies well with the multidisciplinary approach advocated by Thomas Faist and others in *International Migration, Immobility and Development*.⁵¹ Faist adds to the traditional view of seeing migration in the light of two main factors, structured in a "macro"- and a "micro"-level, by introducing a third level, a so-called "meso"-level. This third level serves as a bridge between the two other concepts, and gives the notion of "culture" a connecting and median role in a comprehensive study of migration.⁵² In my project, the sensible idea of a meso-level suits well the basic role of the Iglund family in the migration process in Hommedal Parish, and the cultural and spiritual processes of liberation which contributed in breaking down the old order, loosening ancient bonds, and giving individuals a ballast of "trust thyself", which all were factors instrumental in opening the valves of departure.⁵³

Faist concludes in his summarizing article that "transgressing disciplinary borders is a commendable, fruitful method, offering great opportunities for further development of social science theories."⁵⁴ Traditionally, attention has often been given to those people who actually migrate, the *movers*. One may argue that their behaviour is not the normal one, but constitutes a deviant case. There is, in other words, good reason to include the *stayers* in studies of the causes of migration and the assessment of the repercussions in the sending area in the post-migration era. This is of course exactly the approach used by key scholars mentioned in the preceding pages. In this present study, however, the restricted number of emigrants from Hommedal Parish in the period 1846-1855, complicates the study of such repercussions in the home-land, and is perhaps of a limited value. On the whole, the special character of emigration from this parish and its region, places it outside the normal pattern of emigration from Norway in the first half of the 19th century.

⁵¹ Thomas Hammar, Grete Brockman, Kristof Tamas, Thomas Faist. *International Migration, Immobility and Development*.

⁵² Thomas Faist, "The Crucial Meso-Level" *International Migration, Immobility and Development*: 197-198.

⁵³ Faist refers to the work of Thomas and Znanieci on Polish peasant migration to the United States. The decision of "movers" and "stayers" can be explained by reference to the breaking-up of the old society, and particularly of its extended family structures due to the marketization of economic life in the sending areas. The break-up of the Polish peasant family was said to create possibilities, especially through the "growing assertion of the personality." W.I. Thomas and F. Znanieci. *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (2 vols.) (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1927).

⁵⁴ Faist, "The Crucial Meso-Level": 247-276.

1.6 A MODEL: THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

The study of international migration has become the domain of not one, but many disciplines. There has been a growing interest in migration in e.g. history, geography, economy, political science, anthropology, education, demography, psychology, and sociology.

History has traditionally been a key discipline within migration research. There are, however, other fields of research which have contributed valuable insights and new perspectives, and the following paragraphs present some of the main perspectives found in these other disciplines.

In geography the main focus is tied to the key concepts of *time* and *space*, and found especially useful when it encompasses the idea of the Frontier, and the continuous movement of migration towards the American West. In Faist's view,

*the geographical approach has moved far beyond a preoccupation with physical barriers ... and now places a premium on (socially 'constructed') space and time. Seen from a micro-perspective, space consists of the projects people are engaged in and the values they adhere to. Time is seen as embedded in larger social structures.*⁵⁵

The life-path perspective is consequently emphasized, and is linked with similar notions in sociology and anthropology: a life-course analysis of migration, and the basic role of cultural causes in migration.

Economy is very much centred round the concepts of resources, markets, and economic rationality. The migrant acts rationally, but he is not always governed by economic reason alone, that is to say, being bent upon goals implying maximum profit and returns. His rationality would sometimes bear the mark of cultural and social considerations, but the element of access to new resources and other markets seems impossible to discard in the study of migration. In the multidisciplinary approach, the potential migrant is seen as a *utility maximizer*, in other words, a person who tries to maximize his individual quality of life.⁵⁶

One central conception starts from the realization that international migration may be "at least partly dependent on differences in income and development between the sending and

⁵⁵ Ibid.: 249.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

receiving countries involved.⁵⁷ In a macro-perspective, some economists would argue that migration is conceived as having an *equilibrating mechanism*. This view implies that welfare standards on both sides are levelled and possibly enhanced. On the other hand, other economists might counter by saying that the concentration of capital and resources become disproportionately concentrated in the sending and receiving areas.⁵⁸

Political science also offers useful perspectives in migration research. The issues of state sovereignty and conflict and consensus form one common question about the availability of new territories, and the political benefits and rights involved. Citizenship is a central keyword, within political science and related fields, though the traditional questions of civil rights and citizenship are still very much debated.

The multidisciplinary approach directed towards the phenomenon of migration also opens the door to studies within sociology and anthropology. Useful labels on those two disciplines could be co-operation and culture. A key question for both disciplines would be: how do interpersonal cultural and social relations affect the course of migration? In particular, anthropology has developed new insights and discovered new horizons which traditional migration research might benefit from. The historical approach has often been too centred upon hard facts as a reason for emigration, thereby shifting the focus away from motives connected to the wide concept of culture. Economy, business cycles, and structures have too often been given priority at the expense of culture, contacts, and chains. On the whole, the trans-Atlantic perspective has been left in the background in Norwegian migration research. This means that emigration has first and foremost been regarded as a movement away from the mother country. The result is that one misses the important fact that emigration often was tied to established networks on the other side of the Atlantic. Similarly, the chain-migrations which followed in the wake of such transatlantic connections have perhaps caught too little attention.

The trans-Atlantic approach has undoubtedly been given a more prominent position in literary studies than in migration history. In American Studies the concepts of ethnicity and assimilation are given ample space, and the themes of the *divided heart* or the *double landscape* are treated as a pair of contrasts: did the immigrant struggle with a heart divided between the old and the new country? Or was he well at ease in a landscape where the ethnic

⁵⁷ Ibid.: 250.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

ballast was a positive factor when new bearings had to be found in the search for a new identity?

1.7 THREE LEVELS: MACRO, MESO, MICRO

In all the disciplines mentioned, the point of departure is in most cases the question: “Why do people migrate?” There is also a growing tendency to add a second question: “Why do people not migrate?” Further there is often a division of interest between different levels of analysis: the macro-, meso- and micro-level.

Macro-studies are often mainly focused on economic differences between communities on a geo-political level. Micro-studies observe differences on a smaller scale, as between individuals, families and groups. The meso-level constitutes a link between the macro- and micro-levels.

Migration may be regarded as both an action and a process. The departure and the consequences involved in the action can be studied from the point of view of a “migrant-decision making”. By and by, migration becomes a process, a lasting phenomenon, which may be studied on a similar footing as other fields of society and culture. Thomas Faist maintains that a new common, methodical approach to the study of migration is needed, and he calls the model “the migration-system”. Whether directed towards events in the past or the present, this approach is based upon three levels, thereby giving the research a shifting focus. By choosing the micro-level, the emphasis is put upon the individual and the decisions made by that individual. What are the important factors for the individual in the process of making the decision to migrate? A person does not, of course, act in a vacuum, but the decision lies fundamentally with the individual person.

If one shifts the focus from a micro-level to a macro-level, the individual human being often disappears in the search for superior structural conditions. What is it in the structure of society which gave rise to migration? What are the obstacles to migration? Many factors may be involved: the degree of political stability in the sending and receiving countries, the arrangements for migration in the different countries within the existing global and economic structures, and the status of economic development in both countries in question.

The meso-level occupies a position between the micro- and macro-levels. In this intermediate level, the general and wider patterns of co-operation and the cultural condition appear more clearly in relation to the emigrant. It is a situation where the heavier structural

conditions in society, on a macro-level, recede, and the emigrant finds himself in a context where he may identify the conditions which affect his choice. One may therefore speak of the social context which the emigrant may relate to, and which forms the basis for his more or less voluntary choice to emigrate.

The meso-level has received greater attention in more recent studies of migration. One may in particular draw the attention to the so-called “chain-migration”. Here the emigrant leaves his native country, assured that he is in a position to make contact and benefit from persons or a network in his destination. He has a possibility of becoming part of a network, built upon kinship, friendship, or neighbourhood. These networks are established in the new country, but are constructed upon contacts between persons in the old country. In such a context, factors of the meso-level have implications on both sides of the separating ocean.

To follow in the footsteps of others is a form of social and cultural capital found at the meso-level. Social and cultural ties vary in former migration communities, just as they do in present migration countries. Not all local communities in Norway developed equally strong cultures for migration. It is important to view the different levels as working together. This is where both process and system must be considered.

1.8 DECISION VS. PROCESS

In the main, the various disciplinary approaches mentioned earlier, fall into two broad categories. In the first place, *causal* explanations centre on what started the process of migration. In the second place, *processual* views concentrate on what happens as the process of migration develops or comes to a stop. One might say that processual accounts establish the mechanisms which produce changes in social, political, and economic structures.⁵⁹

What does it mean to study migration as decision-making, compared to analyzing the process of migration? In focusing on the decision itself, one must emphasize the triggering effect on all three levels. Shifting focus to process would entail setting the act of departure aside, and rather look into how migration becomes a permanent characteristic feature in society and its culture.

The shift in focus from decision-making to migration as a process may be exemplified on all three levels. By directing attention to the micro-level, and the individual decision to

⁵⁹ Ibid.: 252.

depart there and then, it becomes interesting to investigate what motives emigrants had over a period of time, and how their access to basic resources was at different times. The establishment of motives may also be regarded as a process: what values and ways of thought took root in local communities in regard of moving or staying? The *stayers* may therefore become an object of study of equal interest with the *movers*, but as already mentioned, the small number of emigrants involved in the 1846 exodus, and the brevity of the influx of new settlers in Missouri, makes it difficult to assess the impact and consequences for the home parish.

On a meso-level the main interest is directed towards seeing migration as an interactive play of various forms of *capital* at different times. In what way do the different elements in the migration process work together? What forms of “capital” were connected to the so-called “chain-migration”? Was it basically a question of the dominance of a cultural capital in the form of encountering old friends and acquaintances? Or did the “chain-migration” also function as a financial capital in the sense that the emigrants were more or less guaranteed jobs through the networks founded by former migrants? Seen differently, pioneer migrants did not have the luxury of relying on such networks. On the other hand, one might of course argue that in the case of the “Landvik-group” there was a budding network in the shape of Reiersen’s colony in Texas, and in settlements like Manitowoc in Wisconsin - or even a hint of such contacts for the 1846 group in the Weddle-Nelson acquaintance in St. Joseph.

The macro-approach maps how the structures in society over a certain period of time paved the way for migration, or, conversely, put obstacles in the way of migration. Development and change would be key-concepts on this level. The fall and rise of business cycles have always been strongly underlined in migration research. It is a central task to put these general tendencies into an over-all picture where such trends are measured against the effects they in fact had on social, political, and cultural conditions and changes. In periods of recession one may read in letters from America that “we have bread on the table”. Thereby the migrant would assure people at home in Norway that they did not suffer hardship, although they knew that the newspapers would tell of hard times in the United States.

1.9 A MIGRATION SYSTEM

By linking the three levels mentioned so far, one may create a concept of a migration system. One could argue that this new system is nothing else but an alternative to the comprehensive model of pull and push. Nevertheless, one might well maintain that the linking of a micro-, meso-, and macro-level represents a new way of thinking compared to the traditional idea of pull and push.

There are three central characteristics in the migration system. Firstly, such a system is created through the context mobility arises in, and thereby results in a condition of choice between moving or staying. We are consequently talking about flows of people between at least two locations, most often states. Migration within a state has gained the status of a human right, whereas migration between states has nearly always been regarded as an issue challenging the sovereignty of the nation-state. Secondly, it should be underlined that the connection between countries and regions is stronger than the links between individual migrants. Trade, the flow of goods, the rendering of services and information, become independent factors, with priority in relation to people themselves. Agreements between countries constitute what migrants and others must relate to. Thirdly, a migration system requires that static and specific factors are secondary. What should be brought to the forefront is the dynamic process. The co-operation between two or more countries, brought about by migration itself, leads to self-reinforcing and self-sustaining minor processes within the totality. None of the participating migration partners has the full overview as to what effects migration might have.

The result of this is that formerly prevalent views of migration research as a linear, push and pull, cause/ effect relation must be renewed. Instead, Thomas Faist would argue, the history of migration must be regarded as a circular, independent, and complex system. Changes in one sector may affect the whole system. For example, the networks founded by migrants, may reduce the effect of variations in international business cycles and economic conditions. The main focus should be upon the specific make-up and various forms of personal and collective projects within migration.

1.10 A COMPREHENSIVE CONCEPT

In Thomas Faist's view it is possible to develop a common concept directed towards migration studies. There are three main questions at the base of such a comprehensive model:

- Why do some people migrate?
- Why do most people stay in their country, and why do many emigrants return?

Three main concepts or ideas appear in many disciplines; they are commonly termed *migratory space*, *local assets*, and *cumulative causation*. The first of these concepts, the migratory space, includes both the locations at departure and destination, as well as political, economic, and cultural bonds and institutions.

*Migratory space is the sum total of personal projects, perceptions and images, on the one hand, and the structure of opportunities available to potential migrants, on the other, linked by intermediate mechanisms such as networks and collectives.*⁶⁰

The local assets point to the conditions that represent obstacles to migration. It is then a question of localizing such obstacles. In a concrete way this may highlight such diverse conditions like financial capital (good or bad access to financial sources), cultural capital (strong collective groups), human capital (education), and social capital (well-founded social contacts between people in the sending community). All these forms of capital may hinder migration.

The concept of cumulative causation is about the effects of migration. What social effects may be discerned in the sending country? When migration happens and continues, does that lead to structural changes in the sending country? Such effects do not only have a bearing in the economic field, but also within areas of social, political, and cultural life and development. There may be many examples; centrally one would find changes in family structures, and the relation between the sexes, the development of a migration culture, and the establishment of a national, political exile-culture abroad.

The different levels of analysis in “migration-decision making” are summarized by Faist in the following way:⁶¹

Level	Micro	Meso	Macro
<u>Focus</u>	Individual decision making	Social relational context of choice	Structural opportunities and constraints
<u>Key terms and issues</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - insider advantages - costs and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - social ties of potential migrants with migratory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - political (in)stability in sending

⁶⁰ Faist, “From Common Questions to Common Concepts”: 247.

⁶¹ Ibid.: 253.

	benefits of staying and going - uncertainty and risk-reducing information - time-space resolution: stage in life course - location-specific capital and assets	space - capital specificity, especially of social capital - cultural variation in structure and role of meso-level units	countries - specific migration systems of nation-states within global politico-economic systems - levels of economic development in sending and receiving countries
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On a micro-level, three dimensions are of particular relevance: the costs and benefits for the potential migrant, the uncertainty and risks involved in the decision to migrate, and the time-space situation linked to the local ties and the period in their life course.⁶² On a meso-level, the analysis has its starting-point in the realization that migration decisions are made in a context, i.e. the various bonds and ties of a social character involved in the project. An analysis on a macro-level repeats the well-established notion that migration has been prompted or hindered by structural conditions, e.g. political conditions, economic inequalities, differences in income and capital, or immigration policies. Such an approach is certainly useful in explaining the basic structural causes of migration. The waves of immigrants into the USA can be explained by the existing economic inequality on either side of the Atlantic, or for that matter, the attraction of political freedom in America or the temptation of a different lifestyle. A full answer to the question why migration occurs is, however, only possible if one takes into account the motives and resources of individual migrants, their life course, and the social and cultural relations that bind both movers and stayers together.

This present study strives to make use of modern approaches to migration research. This does not mean that traditional viewpoints have become obsolete, but combined with multidisciplinary approaches, they make for a richer ground in migration studies. In particular, the introduction of a so-called “meso-level” in the migration system opens the door

⁶² Ibid.: 252.

for a better understanding of the mechanisms which led to emigration on a national, regional, and local level. In the case of the exodus from Hommedal Parish, the emphasis on the role of culture and family relations seems to enrich the comprehension of what factors were needed to break loose from the old society.

When the focus shifts from the motivating factors behind emigration to the process of settlement in the USA, it becomes necessary to bring other approaches into operation. The moment they became settlers on foreign soil, the immigrants met with new problems and issues: should they embrace “Americanization” and rapid assimilation, or did they harbour a dream of remaining “Norwegian“ in America? Did they flock together to find comfort in a common ethnic identity, or were they inclined to burn their bridges and become truly American citizens, take the oath, and renounce their King? There is of course no break in the continuous effect of the factors which led to emigration; they represent a fundamental cultural and spiritual ballast for the settlers, but at their journey’s end they must have weighed the possible success of their daring endeavour. The question is then, how is such a success to be measured? The easy version is of course to view the outcome in economic terms. Their goal was undoubtedly to secure a better future for their children and themselves. If they managed to purchase a farm, succeeded in mastering the challenge of new crops and a ruthless economic system, were able to transfer land to their offspring, put money in the bank, and on a somewhat different basis, saw them well cared for and established in their own family, then one might conclude that it had all been a success, although the human cost of the experiment remains an obscure factor.

In the last analysis, however, less tangible factors must be put on the scales. Economic success is fairly easily measured, but money is hardly an all-embracing standard for everybody. Although we might be able to show that the pioneers did reach their material goals, it is far harder to measure sentiments and feelings often connected to the experiences of leaving one’s native land, and exposing oneself to all-too-common consequences of such an act: alienation, uprootedness, and isolation.

PART ONE:
EMIGRANTS

CHAPTER I:
A PASSAGE TO AMERICA

In the sheltered port of Grimstad, on the southernmost coast of Norway, the schooner *Grethe Lovise* lay ready to set sail for Le Havre in France. The 400-ton-vessel, under the command of Captain Pedersen, was at anchor in the quiet bay, a short distance from the cluster of white, wooden houses making up the little township.

It was September 17, 1846, about 40 years before the little town would increase its population from 800 to 3,200,¹ and become one of the leading centres of shipping and ship-building activities in Norway. The golden era of the tall ships was fairly close at hand, and even now local ships were weaving their web of shipping routes across the seas, making Norwegian ships and seamen the freighters of the world.²

On the quay, a group consisting of 79 people was eagerly waiting to board the ship, surrounded by family and friends, and burdened with trunks and all sorts of odds and ends for the great voyage. One of the emigrants was even toiling with two massive wheels. A reporter from a local newspaper was also present:

*Today, from our harbour, the schooner "Grethe Lovise" set sails, commanded by captain Pedersen, bound for Havre de Grace with 80 emigrants, who at the play of violins, cries of hurrah, and the fire of a salute, said farewell to their native country.*³

A stone's throw from the port, young Henrik Ibsen might have witnessed the scene from a window in the local pharmacy; he had arrived a couple of years earlier to take up his apprenticeship with the town's pharmacist. Local tradition cherishes the idea that young Ibsen furnished the emigrants with a chest of useful medicines.⁴

¹ Grimstad had 806 inhabitants in 1845 (*Census Returns, 1845*), and 3,172 in 1890 (*Norges Officielle Statistik*).

² The story of the passage to New Orleans, and further on to St. Joseph, is a jig-saw puzzle put together from various sources of information; they are: newspaper reports in Norway and America, information in the letters from the emigrants, family traditions in Norway, collected by Anna Iglund Bendixen. *Et 150-års mine – utvandring fra Iglund i 1846, I, II* (1996, 1998); (*private collection* and pamphlets deposited at Grimstad Bibliotek/ *Public Library*), and information collected through articles written by Kristen Stalleland (*private collection*). On two occasions (1896 and 1906), *the Weekly Kansas Chief* printed articles to commemorate the first Norwegian settlement. These articles give details about the passage to America, and concur with what is preserved in family traditions in Norway. The late Nora C. Nelson in St. Joseph was nearly all her life an avid collector of material connected to the Nelson Family. Her correspondence and cooperation with Professor Frank G. Nelson of Hilo, Hawaii, is a rich reservoir of family tradition. She was also the keeper of Peder Nelson's strong box, and this material and her notes were put at my disposal by Jane Nelson Thompson of St. Joseph. This material is not, of course, scientific in the sense that the course of events described might be verified in every detail. It is built upon family tradition, even family myth, and in some cases eyewitness reports from members of the Nelson family.

³ *Vestlandske Tidende*, no. 76, September 17, 1846. My translation.

⁴ Sigrun and Olav Uldal. "Emigranter fra Grimstad 1844-1850" *Utvandrernummer, Medlemsskrift* 30 (Selskapet for Grimstad Bys Vel, 1975): 15-44.

When this company of emigrants cast off, they had put behind them a lot of difficulties and practical problems to get on their way. Negotiations over transport had not been easy. They had began toying with the idea of emigration in the early 1840s, and had made plans to leave in 1845, when they negotiated with a shipping firm from Bremen with the intent of sailing directly from Norway to New Orleans. This attempt foundered, and also the next try came to nothing.

One can easily imagine the host of practicalities which had to be arranged before their departure: the negotiations and arrangement of transportation, farms sold in good time before setting off, household contents auctioned away, provisions for the voyage bought, and health certificates and passports obtained. And perhaps above all, one must not get ill. And, of course, the very process of severing the bonds of their native community was difficult and had lingering psychological effects.

The group of pioneers was largely made up of farmers, their families, and servants. They were led by two brothers, Osul Nielsen Enge and Anders Nielsen Holte, and their cousin Peder Nielsen Dolholt Kalvehaven. They were all of *Igland*-stock in Landvik Parish, but had settled in the neighbouring parishes of Eide and Birkenes.

The whole idea of emigration may have had its beginning in an announcement by Peder Kalvehaven's two teenager sons, Nils and Jørgen, that they wanted and intended to make a career at sea. This plan could have stemmed from their sister's marriage to a sea captain, O.M. Dannevig. Peder Kalvehaven who undoubtedly was familiar with life and work at sea, was sceptical and evidently had no illusions about a young sailor's life on a tall ship. As an alternative – and to appease his wife, he suggested that the whole family go to America.⁵ His cousins and other relatives liked the idea, and the seed was planted for their exodus in 1846.

Before long the company met with the autumn storms in the North Sea. In the English Channel they had to seek refuge, and limped ashore in Ramsgate. In the little port they had to

⁵ Laura Nelson Steanson (Peder Kalvehaven's daughter) made this remark in a letter: "He came for his children's sake and to prevent his two sons from following the sea, as their great ambition was to become sea captains." Letter in Nora C. Nelson's keeping. By courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO.

spend the next 10 days while the vessel was being repaired and made fit to continue, and some of the passengers considered returning home because of the adverse weather. Laura Nelson Steanson, Peder Kalvehaven's daughter, made this comment in a letter:

*We were in the North Sea about seven weeks and finally landed at Ramsgate, England, where we remained two weeks, and then went to Le Havre, France, where we remained two weeks. Peder Nelson paid the cost of the pilot boat and the landing at Ramsgate in order to save us all from destruction of the raging storms.*⁶

They struggled, however, on to Le Havre in France, where they left the *Grethe Lovise*,⁷ and found a new ship, the *Izette*, a 500-ton-schooner from Boston, after two weeks' waiting on French soil. The French port was at that time an important centre for emigrants who intended to risk the voyage across the Atlantic.

The passage from France to America was relatively uneventful. The weather was calm and impatience was perhaps a greater problem than the usual scourge of seasickness. There were also German emigrants onboard; they kept to themselves in their own compartment, as did the Norwegians in another. It would be unreasonable, however, to assume that their compartments were totally isolated. Some contacts were probably established, and the German passengers may have had valuable information to pass on to the Norwegians. Usually, the ship supplied coal and water for the passengers, but they had to bring their own food. Some instances of human drama occurred. A baby was born, and she was given the name *Izette* after the ship. Her parents were Anders Nielsen Holte and Gjertrud Omundsdatter Espegræn. There was also romance in the air: Aasille Elise, one of Peder Kalvehaven's daughters, fell in love with one of the ship's officers, a Prussian whom she later married.

For those with deft fingers and initiative there were opportunities to break down the tedious routines onboard. Peder Kalvehaven had been foresighted enough to bring with him a book containing self-studies in English. He used the passage wisely to improve his English. A French merchant had his own cabin, in which he stored artificial flowers intended for sale in America. Family tradition has it that Peder Kalvehaven's two youngest daughters, Olava (14) and Maren Christine (12), were among the lucky ones who were given such flowers. Their

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ It is unclear what happened to this vessel afterwards; she is not listed in the customs office records in Grimstad in 1850.

older sister, Aasille Elise, fell ill as they approached the West Indian islands, but she recovered with the help of her ardent 27-year-old Prussian suitor. He did not speak a word of Norwegian, but the story goes that he kept up his flirtation by throwing little sticks at her. The Prussian, James Wilhelm Pettis, came to America as first mate on the *Izette*. The Genealogical Society in St. Joseph has his name listed as “originally Stoffelragen”. How he came to use the name Pettis, is in itself an interesting little story.⁸

The ship reached American port on January 6, 1847, 110 days after the departure from Norway. The company went ashore in New Orleans, where they stayed for the next ten weeks, scraping through a rough winter, and weighing the possibilities for a permanent settlement, either in Texas or to the north.

Housing facilities were not immediately easy to find, but flexible solutions to the problem were found. For instance, Peder Kalvehaven bought for a flat-bottomed boat which he partly furnished as his house. From materials left over, he made two little boats and sold them at a profit. His son, Nels, got employment in the harbour, and also helped his father with his various projects.

Family tradition also claims that the Haaversens rented a house on Canal Street. It had a yard and a well. They had to be very observant about hygiene, and regularly boiled their water, since the town was severely affected by illness. The area was the centre of troop movements and war supplies for the Mexican War, and diseases like dysentery and “climate fever”, were wide-spread.⁹

In many ways New Orleans turned into a nightmare for the Norwegian immigrants. Apart for various illnesses and accidents, the adaptation to a strange and chaotic city was difficult to master, and the psychological impact of the long weeks of waiting, must have strained their well-being. Of the original group of 80 persons, 12 lost their lives in the city.

Some of the deaths were caused by accidents. Knut Haaversen, one of the Stensvand boys, was unfortunate while the *Izette* was unloading her cargo at the quay in New Orleans.

⁸ A family “story” reports that he jumped ship in New Orleans and met a man there by the name of Pettis. He then simply decided to use the same name. His German name was difficult to pronounce – the children called him Mr. Stockfish – and Pettis sounded definitely better in America. Another version has also been presented. It appears that Pettis was the name of a family of bankers who lived along the Mississippi. Pettis was therefore a well-known name which brought out certain connotations of wealth. He must have used the name Peters as well, because his last name was listed as Peters in the 1850 Census.

⁹ Osul Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 1.*

He fell into the hold, was hurt severely, and was carried to the hospital, but died a few days later from the injuries.

Nine adults and three children were buried in New Orleans. Among the five grown women who died, four were in their prime with little children. They had survived a storm in the English Channel, a period of transit in France, cramped quarters on the *Izette*, and now at the gate of the *Promised Land*, they were cut short in their efforts to secure a better future for their children. Left behind were 12 motherless children. Among the dead were Gjertrud Espægren, married to Anders Nielsen Holte, and their new-born girl Izette.

Osuld Kittelsen and his wife Torine were the victims of the same destiny, and their children were perhaps even worse off. Their three children were orphans in a strange city. The family was severely hit because their father, mother, and a little brother were dead. The three surviving children were taken care of by their uncle John Beruldsen Kiland, a 30-year-old bachelor who was also one of the immigrants. He brought them to Chicago, and the only thing known about their further destiny is that the son, Aasulv, worked in a printer's shop.¹⁰

Other destinies were also sealed in a dramatic way in New Orleans. Ole Bjelland with his wife Berte and three children were on the *Izette*. The wife and the eldest son, Nils, succumbed to the illness, and Ole was left in charge of the remaining two children. He saw no other way out of the situation than to leave the little girl with a family in New Orleans, and try to reach his sister who had settled in Wisconsin. Together with his three-year-old son Ommund, he travelled on the Mississippi nearly as far north as the Great Lakes. In Galena in Illinois he went ashore, and continued on foot. Kristen Stalleland tells that he took his son on his back, and fought his way through endless forests across the state, and finally came to his sister Oddborg on the west coast of Lake Michigan. He left his son there, and got himself work as a sawmill worker. It took him four years before he was able to return to see his son.¹¹

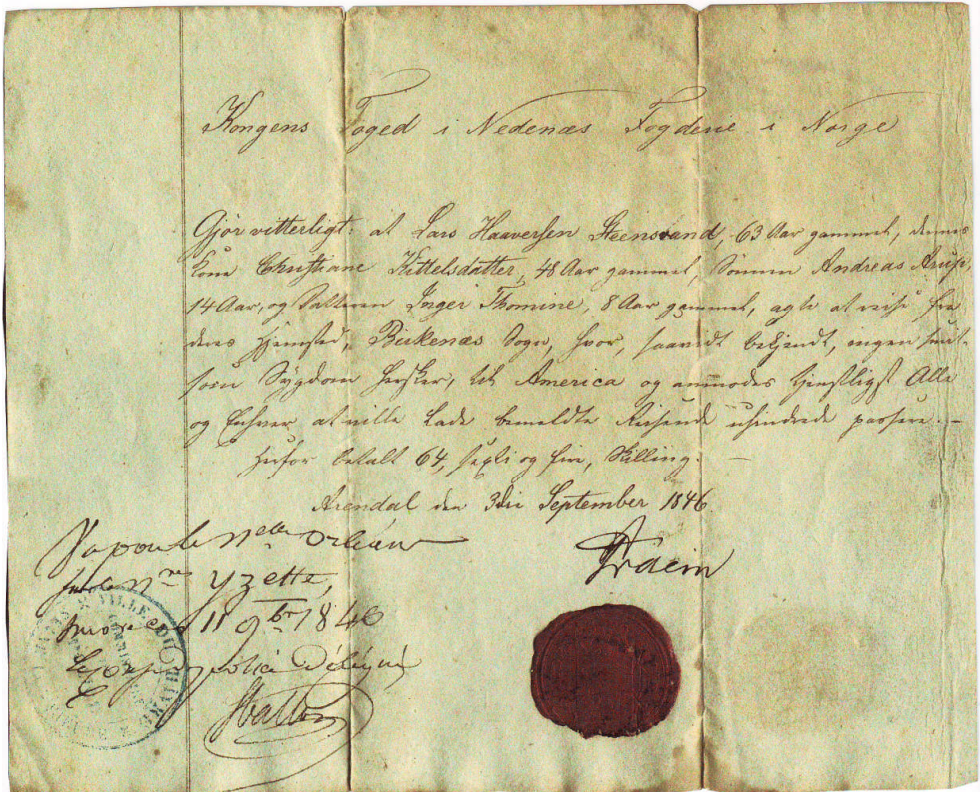
Ommund, the young son, was by now known as Edmund, and shortly after his return, Ole Bjelland set off again, presumably to see his daughter in New Orleans, but he disappeared on the way, and was never seen again. Gunvor, the daughter, also slips out of history, and it is unknown what happened to her. Ommund was left with a scanty memory of his father, and

¹⁰ Kristen Stalleland. *Våre folk i Amerika* (private collection).

¹¹ Ibid.

the few copper coins left him. He later fought in the Civil War, and was taken prisoner, wounded, on July 7, 1864.

The stay in New Orleans appears as a dimly-lit picture with a few highlighted details. The immigrants evidently came too late in the year to continue their long journey, and they probably needed more time to make a joint decision where they actually wanted to settle. One may only make a guess as to what discussions and arguments they went through during the winter months, and ponder the perhaps dismal effects the climate and the health conditions had upon their spirits. When spring came, and the Mississippi was navigable, their continued journey must have been a kind of relief for the “Landvik-group”.



Facsimile of passport issued by "Fogd" Praem to Lars Haaversen Stensvand, his wife Kristiane Kittelsdatter, their son Andreas Arup (14), and their daughter Inger Thomine (8) in 1846. The document was stamped by the port authorities in Le Havre upon embarkation on the *Izette*.
 By courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO.

CHAPTER II:
THE LEADERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

2.1 FAMILY SKETCHES

The *Igland* family was undoubtedly at the hub of the 1846 emigration to America. It is true that many in the family had moved to neighbouring parishes in the 1830s and 40s, but there was never any doubt about their belonging and identity as true *Landvik* people. This was a time when parish borders were easily crossed, and even more so as the number of children grew in a region with limited land resources. It is therefore fair to say that family background and connections constituted a web of interrelations between brothers, sisters, cousins and more distant relatives.

Two brothers and their sister, all born and bred at the *Igland* farm, stood at the forefront of the 1846 exodus. They were Osul Nielsen *Igland* Enge, Anders Nielsen *Igland* Holte, and Maren Nielsdatter *Igland* Løvaasen. These three joined forces with their cousin, Peder Nielsen Dolholt Kalvehaven to implement their dreams of a better life.

The three men were clearly instigators, inspirators, and leaders. Maren, as would be expected in those days, played the role of a respected, yet more withdrawn mater familias.

The following illustration shows the family relations:¹

Peder Nilsen *Igland* (1724 – 1809)

married to Maren Nielsdatter Haabesland

|

(6 children) |

Nils Pedersen *Igland* d.e. (1761 – 1840)

married to Aase Osulsdatter Løvaasen

|

(7 children) |

Maren

Osul

Anders

Peder

Nils Pedersen *Igland* d.y. (1763 – 1839)

married to Aase Olsdatter Haslelien

|

¹ Nils Pedersen *Igland*. *Iglandsætten* (Privately published, 1898).

According to Kristen Stalleland, Peder Nilsen Igland had in his time been in the midst of violent quarrels with civil servants in the county over unreasonable fees on the administration of his estate. The clerk had seemingly used 32 pages to write out the document, which then cost 16 “riksdaler”. Stalleland claims that this was the price of four or five cows. “Peder was furious,” the story goes.²

Obviously a staunch opponent of the civil servants and by consequence a defender of peasant rights and privileges, Peder Nilsen Igland must have been a rich man. He had ownership of three farms: Igland valued at 15 calf hides, Kiland valued at 15 calf hides, and Birkedal valued at 6¾ calf hides.

His estate was split between three of his six sons, Nils Pedersen Igland (the elder) settled at Igland, Nils Pedersen Igland (the younger) at Kiland, but later moved to Dolholt, while Aasulv Pedersen Igland got Birkedal, and later moved to Grøsle; Lars and Gutorm moved out of the parish, whereas Gunnar wrote one “letter” after he left home: “I came here to day, I leave to day.”³ After that, he was never heard of again.

2.2 PEDER NIELSEN DOLHOLT KALVEHAVEN (1794 – 1884)⁴

Peder Nilsen Igland’s second son was Nils Pedersen Igland, sometimes also named after the two farms Kiland and Dolholt where his wife came from. She was Aase Olsdatter Haslelien, his cousin, and the daughter of a local schoolmaster who lived at Dolholt.

Their son, Peder, was born at Kiland, but moved with his parents to Dolholt where he spent his youth. Here he met Karen Marthea Olsdatter Bjerke, who at that time was a maid servant with the vicar at Hommedal vicarage. She came from a wealthy family in Øvre Romerike, and had worked with a businessman in the capital, before taking up the esteemed position in Landvik, the equivalent of finishing school for farmers’ daughters in those days.

They got married in Landvik Church in 1823, and had six children. The children were aged 12 to 22, and both the parents were 52 years old when they sailed for America in 1846. The couple rented land at Vestre Hove in Eide Parish the first years they were married, and here the eldest children were born. After 12 years’ marriage, Peder took over his parents’ farm at Dolholt, as their eldest son. Seemingly, the family saw a future in this farm, and in 1840 a new two-storey house was built there. In the same year, however, while the construction was

² Kristen Stalleland. *Amerikafararar frå Landvik og Herefoss* (Private collection): 3-4.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Sources: Anna Igland Bendixen, op. cit., II: 9-15, and Kristen Stalleland, op. cit.: 4-5. Nora C. Nelson’s notes; by courtesy of Jane NelsonThompson and Joseph Morton Nelson, St. Joseph, MO.

in progress, he bought Kalvehaven, a farm under Vestre Haave in Eide Parish. The family then settled on the coast, as landowning peasants.

Eide Parish had its activities in a large measure directed towards the sea. It is true that the area was known as *Canaan*, which meant that the soil was fertile and the land was sheltered, but the farms were small and land and forests were insufficient to supply the daily bread for a family. Where other parishes found their main livelihood within agriculture and forestry, sawmills and shipbuilding, Eide Parish had to rely on other activities offered by the closeness to the sea. At the beginning of the 19th century, about one quarter of the male population were engaged wholly or partially as pilots. Strong currents along the coast forced tall ships to seek assistance in rough and difficult waters, and the locals were quick to exploit the possibilities to make a profit when such ships came to quay in Homborsund.

People on the coast had their attention in many ways directed towards the continent. Trade across the Skagerrak to Denmark was a regular business, and the limited crops from the small farms were supplemented with goods from Denmark. Homborsund, the port in Eide Parish, became a centre for the export of lobster to England, and the Dutch also took part in the same trade. Homborsund had a strategic position, and offered a safe haven in times of adverse winds. This led to fervent activities in the little harbour, with several hundred ships docking yearly.

In its turn, this activity had positive repercussions for the population. For example, mooring rings on your property could mean a nice extra income. Moorings were for rent, and ships' captains had to pay for the use of them. The Kalvehaven farm had seven such rings, and had by consequence an easy addition to their finances. Ports often had a few taverns and inns, and in 1801 the owner of Kalvehaven received a permission to run an inn, and supply ships in Homborsund with provisions and firewood.

In such an environment a man from the inland settled with his family. Peder's house was literally built on the quays, and the maritime activities were at close hand. Boatbuilding was in no way unknown to a farmer from Landvik, and Peder may have had one of his main interests in precisely that business. In America, family tradition claims that he was mainly occupied in boatbuilding and seafaring while in Norway. To be noted, however, is the fact that boatbuilding may not have been easy in Eide Parish. The parish had few forests, in fact, a

report from 1845 states that there were little or no forests. There was also a lack of brooks, not to say rivers, which meant difficult transportation of timber, as well as a lack of sawmills.

We know that Peder's wife, Karen Marthea, was a clever housewife. The role of the housewife may not always be at the forefront when history is written, but in the case of Karen Marthea, family tradition has strongly underlined her efforts and status. Among other thing, it is repeatedly mentioned that she during their stay in New Orleans insisted on having the water boiled, and was very observant about hygienic conditions. It was perhaps not a coincidence that their eldest daughter, Sara, was vaccinated against smallpox as early as 1825.

Many years after their emigration to America, Karen was remembered for her hospitality in their home in Homborsund: "Give my regards to your wife for her repeated good deeds when she warmed me with beer and liquor on cold days along the quays in Kalvehaven," wrote an acquaintance of the family.⁵

His broad experience in maritime affairs, coupled with numerous contacts with people from all parts of the region, gave Peder an advantage compared to his cousins. He was at home with sailors and their dialect, and seems to have been "one of the boys" on board the *Grete Lovise*. This is clearly seen in the two conflicting views on how the Norwegian sailors and their captain behaved on the passage to France.⁶

According to family tradition, Peder was a man of wealth and capital. When the *Grete Lovise* was being repaired in the docks in Ramsgate, he was in the position to offer the captain financial support to finish the work. And there was in general a certain class connected with the family. The eldest daughter was said to have bathed her face in milk every evening to keep her skin soft, and they brought with them silver cutlery in their baggage. When they reached St. Joseph, and went ashore from the riverboat, they were met by a driver and a wagon. The settler, who owned the wagon, was originally from the Danish aristocracy, and the Kalvehaven family was invited to stay the first week in his house.

There seems to be solid reason to claim that Peder did not show the resentment towards the civil servants, as did his cousins. It was said that he harboured his own private aspirations to rise in society, and become one of the much scolded bureaucracy. There is no

⁵ Anna Bendixen Iglund, op. cit., II: 14. My translation.

⁶ See *Letters from the Pioneers*, nos. 1, 6.

doubt, however, that all the three leaders of the exodus were men of respect and social standing in their family and respective communities.

2.3 OSUL NIELSEN IGLAND ENGE (1802 – 1880)⁷

Nils Pedersen Iglan, the eldest son to Peder Nilsen Iglan and Maren Nilsdatter Haabesland, was born in 1761 and died in 1840. He was married in 1794 to his cousin, Aase Osulsdatter Løvaasen. Per, the eldest son, remained at the Iglan farm, and became father of Nils Iglan, well-known member of the *Storting*. Their second son, Osul, was born in 1802, and was married to his cousin, Gunhild Terjesdatter Haaland, in 1827 in Landvik Church. The couple settled at Enge in Eide Parish. Here they had seven children, but experienced the tragedy of seeing their eldest son, Nils, being killed in an accident at the age of five.

There is no doubt that Osul Nielsen Enge played the part of a pillar of society. He served as a member of the *Formannskap* (the executive group of the Parish Council) in Eide Parish, was a member of the Electoral College in Hommedal in 1838 and 1841,⁸ and in 1840 he was acting deputy chairman of Nedenes County Council.⁹ In other words, he must have been a man who enjoyed both confidence and trust with his parishioners. However, there must also have been another side to his convictions: at the same time as acting on behalf of his electorate in public offices, he showed stiff-necked and negative attitudes towards the bureaucracy and the privileged and well-to-do merchants, and was therefore – together with his brother – in many ways branded a social rebel.

On his departure from Norway in 1846, Osul Enge sold his farm in Eide Parish to *Stortingsmann* Enge.

His wife died in Kansas in 1867,¹⁰ and in 1871 he paid a visit to his native country. On his return to America, at least four persons from Landvik followed him. According to Stalleland¹¹ they were: Olav Eskedal, Mathias Ronnen, Aanon Kylland, and Anne Pedersdatter, the widow after Gutorm Liodden from Tønnesøl. In 1873, at the age of 71, Osul Enge married Anne Pedersdatter.¹²

⁷ Sources: Anna Iglan Bendixen, op. cit., I: 12, and Kristen Stalleland, op. cit.: 5.

⁸ Stalleland, op. cit.: 5.

⁹ Tveiten, op. cit.: 92-93.

¹⁰ Osul Nelson, 1867. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no.3.

¹¹ Stalleland, op. cit.: 5.

¹² In his obituary she is named Anna J. Thompson; *The Weekly Kansas Chief*, December 9, 1880: *Father Nelson, in 1872, sent to Norway for Mrs. Anna J. Thompson, who, in January, 1873, became his wife they living together*

2.4 ANDERS NIELSEN IGLAND HOLTE (1809 – 1887)¹³

The new generation at Iglund at the beginning of the 19th century numbered three girls and four boys. Anders was the youngest of the boys, and Anna Iglund Bendixen notes that he early showed the markings of an engaged and knowledgeable man, with initiative and a flair for humour.¹⁴

He was Nils Pedersen Iglund's fourth son, born on July 3, 1809. Quite early he left home, and worked for a while in the herring fisheries on the West Coast. Later he moved to the Tønsberg district to attend the newly founded Academy of Agriculture. In fact, he was the first farmer from Nedenes County to graduate from such an institution.

He went on to work as a farm-hand with the vicar in Vestre Moland, and this was where he met Gjertrud Ommundsdatter Espegren from Birkenes. She was a maid servant at the same farm, and they got married in 1839, the year Anders turned 30. The same year they settled at Nedre Holte in Birkenes Parish, a farm of considerable size in those days. Stalleland notes casually that the couple was deep in debt, and had a hard time coping at their new farm.¹⁵

There are no records showing that Anders held public offices like his big brother, Osul. The two brothers are, however, often mentioned together and seen as advocates of the same attitudes. Helge Ove Tveiten writes: "Both Osul and Anders were dissatisfied with the ways government was managed in the country ... and were in many respects social rebels."¹⁶

In his letters from America, he showed a keen interest in current affairs, and was well oriented about the political situation in Europe. He followed quite closely the political and economical state of affairs in Norway, and had his own humorous comments to the development of modern Norway.¹⁷

until death separated them. She brought with her three children of her former husband, who, together with their mother, six children – two boys and four girls – thirty three living grandchildren and eighteen great grandchildren, mourn the loss of Father Nelson.

¹³ Sources: Anna Iglund Bendixen, op. cit., II: 54 -55; Kristen Stalleland, op. cit.: 5-6.

¹⁴ Bendixen, op. cit., II: 54.

¹⁵ Stalleland, op. cit.: 6.

¹⁶ Helge Ove Tveiten, op. cit.: 92 – 93. My translation.

¹⁷ Anders Nelson, 1871 and 1879. *Letters from the Pioneers, nos. 11, 13.*

Anders and his family met with a tragic start in his new country. His wife, Gjertrud, a new-born baby, and their four-year-old twin daughters died before they had reached their destination. As a consequence, the process of getting established in America was quite a different affair for him compared to that of his fellows. He was a widower with two little children, Grete Marie, (4), and Nels Olaus (2), and took a fairly long time to settle in as a farmer like the majority of his companions. It was the children's aunt, Gjertrud's sister Alette, who took care of the children in the beginning. Quite probably she continued the care when Anders volunteered for service in the United States Army.

Anders remained in Missouri up to his death in 1886. It is unclear how long Alette stayed with them, but after some time she moved with her husband to San Francisco, and was good at keeping up contact with the two children. In April 1851, Anders married for the second time. The bride was Anne Iversdatter Lunden from Reddal in Landvik Parish.

2.5 MAREN NILSDATTER LØVAASEN (1796 – 1880)¹⁸

Maren was the eldest daughter at Igland. Her two younger brothers, Osul and Anders, have in all respects been portrayed as active and foresighted leaders in the exodus to America. Maren, on the other hand, has hardly been mentioned, which is a pity, because her role in the process would probably have pointed to the varied and important part the women played. The story of the emigrants has in most ways been told from the perspective of the men, whereas the women have been taken for granted: even in the letters they are most often incorporated in general terms of regards.

When she married Osul Andersen Løvaasen in 1822, she chose a man among her own relatives.¹⁹ But she remains the least known of the *Igland* brothers and sister who emigrated in 1846. By that time she and her husband had six children, aged from five to 23. Once established in America, they were known under the name of Andersen or Anderson.

Little is known about her years at Igland, but by inference we may glimpse everyday life at the farm, where her father in the war years struggled to feed his cattle, and thereby secure the life of his family. Nils Igland wrote in his book from 1874 that his “wife had an important part in the management of the farm, because he never did anything without asking

¹⁸ Sources: Anna Igland Bendixen, op. cit., I: 41-42; Kristen Stalleland, op. cit.: 9.

¹⁹ Osul Andersen Løvaasen's grandfather was Osul Andersen Løvaasen, who died in 1786. He was Peder Nilsen Igland's cousin. Kristen Stalleland, op. cit.: 9.

her advice.”²⁰ Aase made significant contributions to the family economy through her sale of butter. This was carefully recorded in Nils’ accounts. These are preserved, and through them we may follow Maren indirectly.²¹ She evidently received new clothes every year, mostly coats and jackets. A seamstress was hired, and we find expenses for a new hat, a scarf, and some dresses. There is one such entry in the year she attended confirmation in Landvik Church.

In the accounts are also found expenses for short travels to Grimstad and Arendal. In those days this was a full day’s journey, relying on boat transportation on *Syndle* and *Nidelva*, and taking even more time on the narrow roads. Arendal in the early part of the 19th century was lively and active, boasting both a theatre and a reading society. It was one of the country’s leading maritime towns, and Maren must have been well acquainted with the sight of tall ships in the harbour.

Maren and Osul were in their 50s when they settled in Missouri. She was then the mother of two sons in their twenties, who may have caused her worries in a time of unrest and upheaval. They moved to Kansas in 1860, saw three sons participate in the Civil War, and established themselves as rather well-to-do farmers, although grasshoppers destroyed their crops at times. She became a widow in 1869.

²⁰ Nils Igland, *Om Gaarden Iglands Beboere* (Privately published, 1874). My translation.

²¹ *Igland Arkivet/ Archives, Aust-Agder Arkivet/ County Archives, Arendal*, dep. 10/ 1992 (13.1 and 13.2).

CHAPTER III:

A FAMILY EXODUS

3.1 A FAMILY MIGRATION

In his article on “the crucial meso-level”,¹ Thomas Faist points to the often-forgotten fact that migration is really about both movers and stayers. In a sociological approach, he further says that most migration theories have centered either on global structural factors which enhance migration (macro-theories), or on factors which motivate individuals to migrate (micro-theories).

However, Faist argues that there is a third way: the meso-level. This is an approach which focuses on social relations and ties between individuals in groups like families, households, neighbourhoods etc. As already indicated, it is an approach which tallies well with the role of culture and family relations in Hommedal Parish in the 1840s as the plans for migration were worked out.

Once pioneer emigrants have left their home country, relatives, friends and acquaintances can benefit from a social capital² and processes of “chain migration” may develop. The social bonds between movers and stayers do not vanish automatically through this act. Such abiding ties would explain why so many emigrants return to their country of origin.

A decision to emigrate is seldom the result of the deliberations of one single individual. In other words, a decision to leave one’s native soil is not an exclusive matter for the individual prospective emigrant, but it is an act often conditioned by more or less decisive standpoints taken by other family members, or by the whole, collective family. And of course, they could also be affected by other families’ decisions in a sort of chain decision. The migration of close relatives or friends may bring about both new chances and perhaps unforeseen obstacles. On the one hand, the act of following in the footsteps on paths trodden by your own relatives may give the prospective migrant the sense of moving in a secure and familiar cultural setting and thus tip the balance in favour of emigration. On the other hand, the departure of people close and dear might represent a severing of both family and cultural bonds and consequently be a hindrance for migration. The sociologist Peter H. Rossi claims that a large number of migration acts are directly caused by changing demographic and family conditions.³ Although his material stems from a limited tract of urban areas in Philadelphia, it contains a parallel to migration studies in the observation of issues like the decision process,

¹ Thomas Faist. “The Crucial Meso-Level”. Tomas Hammar, Grete Brockmann, Kristof Tamas and Thomas Faist, ed., *International Migration, Immobility and Development*: 187 – 188.

² “Social capital are those resources inherent in patterned social ties that allow individuals to co-operate in networks and collectives, and/ or that allow individuals to pursue their goals.” *Ibid.*: 199.

³ Peter H. Rossi. *Why Families Move* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1980): 222, 225.

the role of trustworthy information, and the search for another dwelling. The role of the family and household structure in migration is no doubt an essential issue for migration researchers.⁴

The migration decision approach was developed as a reaction to the so-called neo-classical migration theory. It was argued that a migration decision is not based on economic calculations and considerations alone, but represents the result of a large number of deliberations, that migration was seldom the result of one person's decision, and that migrants often had scanty information about conditions at potential destinations. One central conclusion, according to Gunnar Malmberg, is that the image of the alternatives offered to the migrant is based upon personal contacts rather than public, written information. It is also obvious that entering new stages in life is a factor that affects any kind of migration. When families choose between different "time-space strategies", the combination of the various individual wishes has to be taken into account, and the resulting plan for the whole family is dependent upon of the plans of each family member.

There are in fact many "life-path strategies" open to most people, and emigration is only one of these. Such alternatives would range from internal migration, e.g. moving from rural areas towards a town, commuting from one local unit to another, or staying immobile, which is what most people have always done. Malmberg points to the huge variety in human mobility and life paths, but also of some dominating "time-space mobility patterns". To go abroad, or to emigrate, could sometimes develop into a common established time-space strategy. For 18th century peasants in Southern Norway, staying in the home valley all their lives would be one such strategy, while emigration to America became an important strategy for people from the same area one hundred years later. To use Thomas Faist's words, migration could be a household strategy for economic survival or even advancement.⁵ Stark and Bloom would argue that a decision to migrate is "a calculated strategy, and not an act of desperation or boundless optimism".⁶

In the case of the exodus from Hommedal Parish in 1846, it took the peasants more than three years to implement their decision to emigrate, and of course, this long period was

⁴ Gunnar Malmberg. "Time and Space in International Migration" *International Migration, Immobility and Development*: 41.

⁵ Thomas Faist. "The Crucial Meso-Level": 197.

⁶ O. Stark and Bloom. "The New Economics of Labor Migration" *American Economic Review* 75 (1985): 173-178. Quoted by Fischer, Martin and Straubhaar. "Should I Stay or Should I Go?" *International Migration, Immobility and Development*: 71.

not spent in idleness. Their conclusion (that emigration was their preferred option) should therefore be seen as a collective decision. A lot of practical questions had to be sorted out, and there must have been a lingering uneasiness about the foundation of their decision. They had, however, secured surprisingly full and accurate information about the new land through Johan Reiersen's report from his quite astounding journey from south to north in the United States, and the plan to emigrate consequently bore the mark of a well-planned and deliberate action with a defined goal: to secure a better future for the children and the adults in the family involved.

A major critique of the neo-classical migration theory points to the fact that migration is not solely influenced by economic considerations. In general, a decision to emigrate is motivated by a wish to obtain some kind of change for the better in everyday life, while at the same time most people have a wish to maintain some kind of stability, for instance, to increase their economic status and still keep the cherished contacts with relatives and friends. The possibility of obtaining this intended change and at the same time upholding the desired stability could depend on a) the differences between the conditions in the places of origin and destination, b) the possibilities and necessity for the migrant to bring with him/ her possessions, relations, customs etc., c) the opportunity to maintain contacts with the home area by return visits and letters, and d) the inclination to substitute important parts of everyday life in the place of origin with new situations in the potential place of destination.⁷

For the Norwegians who settled in the United States in the early period of immigration, the sensible and preferred thing was to stick together in basically Norwegian "pockets", supporting each other also in practical ways. They were eager to establish two major institutions on American soil: a church and a school. In the first phase they often wrote positive letters to their relations in Norway, praising the wonders of the new world, and certainly urging others to follow in their footsteps. They were even willing to purchase land for prospective newcomers, and postpone payment until after arrival. When Osul Nelson (Osul Nielsen Enge) returned from Norway on a visit after 25 years in America, he was joined by a small group of new male emigrants who were welcomed by their compatriots in Missouri and Kansas. It is a small, but striking detail that the local newspaper in Grimstad praised the endeavours of the local emigrants, proudly calling them "our people in America".

⁷ Malmberg, *op. cit.*: 42.

For the settlers of the “Landvik-group”, however, the situation in Missouri was different. They were only 52 people in all at the outset, and consequently they were too few to be able to found their own particular institutions like a church and a school. It is true that they in the main tried to stay close to each other, but their limited number more or less forced them to co-operate with other settlers, like Germans and Danes, to establish churches and schools. It seems that they chose a pragmatic path, and thereby sacrificed many of their national characteristics, although they certainly cherished contacts with the old country and the important stabilizing factor of being geographically and socially close to relatives and friends.

Gunnar Malmberg states that the migration-system models were developed in reaction to the short-comings of push-pull and interaction models in explaining the “diversified geographical distribution of migration flows”.⁸

The migration process is often kept up through processes of “cumulative causation”, to use Gunnar Myrdal’s original term. The idea behind this concept is that growing emigration may set off structural changes in the country of origin that make following or additional migration more likely, and would on the whole maintain the flow of migration.⁹

P. Neal Ritchey maintains that kinship and friendship could affect migration in the four following ways: a) with a negative effect, as long as major social relations prevail within the original area, b) a constraining effect, as long as information from the emigrated relatives provide a negative image of conditions at destination, c) a stimulating effect, when the information is positive and encourages emigration, and d) a positive effect on migration and the migrants’ adjustment, when relatives provide assistance in the area of destination.¹⁰

Such a stimulating and positive effect is clearly seen e.g. a letter written by Osul Nelson in 1848:

The land here is very fertile. Here grows what you sow in abundance, and as you know without fertilizers, although the soil is mostly given a careless and bad treatment. For the most part one grows maize, or corn as it is called here. Wheat, hemp and oats, though the latter only for the cattle. The corn is mostly eaten by cattle and pigs, even though it was good and wholesome nourishment for people, giving somewhat dry bread, but is very well suited to the heap of pork eaten here. Potatoes

⁸ Ibid.: 39.

⁹ Thomas Faist. “From Common Questions to Common Concepts”: 248.

¹⁰ P. Neal Ritchey. “Explanations of Migration” *Annual Review of Sociology* 2 (1976):363-404. Quoted by Malmberg, op. cit.: 40.

*are also grown, rye, barley and many different garden crops. It is admirable to see how many things grow here. ... Natural conditions are very favourable here in all respects. The soil is very easy to till.*¹¹

The flow of information from family members abroad to those who stay behind is of considerable importance. Such information reduces the uncertainty and is likely to ease the decision to move for additional family members. It is also easier to migrate if members of the same social group already live in the destination country, a fact that has given reason for sociological theories of cumulative causation and migration networks. Such mechanisms were evidently at work in the *Igland*-network, and other immigrants supplemented the settlement in Missouri up till about 1855. The economic development at *Sørlandet* after that had, however, the effect that emigration became a less tempting option because of the favourable economic situation. Immigration to Buchanan County dried out after 1855, and left the “Landvik people” very much isolated from other Norwegians in America.

To move to a new environment means to replace resources and family- and personal ties at a given place of origin for those of another place. This is often difficult, especially if the person is firmly rooted, and closely integrated with people and actions there. If conditions at origin and destination are very different, migration might simply be too big a step.

Migration decisions are often part of a long-time strategy of a family or an individual, and linked to other activities and projects. If people are strongly committed to these activities and in other ways tied to the home community or to the physical location where they live, then it might be difficult for them to move.

However, if family, friends and a whole cultural pattern are transferred to an alternative location, this might trigger emigration. It seems that this solution in general remains a path for the relatively few; for most people there seems to be obvious advantages in remaining in the place of origin (to day 98% of the world population are immobile, i.e. non-migrants).

By choosing other time-space strategies – internal migration, temporary migration, improvement societies, education, reorganizing, or political voice or protest – the pros and cons of both origins and destinations might be combined, and come to stand for a “softer” alternative to the radical and difficult decision to move permanently across the seas. Earlier

¹¹ Osul Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers, no.1.*

internal migration may lead to international migration, or pioneer migrants may serve as role models for other potential migrants.¹²

Economists have also taken the criticism against the so-called neo-classical approach seriously, accepting its short-comings, and establishing a more flexible and relaxed model, which allegedly would make the micro-level behavioural model a powerful tool in analysing migration.

Peter A. Fischer, Reiner Martin and Thomas Straubhaar take their point of departure in demolishing a handful of classical assertions or implications:¹³

- migration is cost-free
- migration is risk-free
- potential migrants are a homogeneous group of people
- potential migrants have perfect and costless information
- potential migrants behave in an unconditionally rational manner
- the potential migrant is an autonomous being with no social context

Consequently, the most classical economic model is therefore hardly able to explain the details and dynamics of migration processes.

Fischer, Martin, and Straubhaar would claim that to look at migration decision makers not as completely independent individuals, but as part of a social group, usually a family or a household, is an extension of the classical micro-economic model.¹⁴ To go a step further, in an interdisciplinary approach many sociological and political meso-models of migration do introduce migration as a group decision.

By means of education and general socialization, the family or household has mostly a strong impact on how individuals perceive the information they obtain. In general terms, the family also has in economics-based migration an important mediating function between the macro-level characteristics which provide the framework for potential migrants, and the micro-level decision-making of the individuals.

¹² Thomas Faist. "The Crucial Meso-Level" *International Migration, Immobility and Development*: 198.

¹³ Peter A. Fischer, Reiner Martin and Thomas Straubhaar. "Interdependencies between Development and Migration" *International Migration, Immobility and Development*: 57.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*: 70.

In the early stages of emigration to America, family ties and relations were important. No doubt, family relations were indeed a prime factor behind the migration movements. The following pages represent an attempt to show how the Igland family, structurally and ideologically, was at the centre of the local web, inspiring and upholding a stable network of kinship and friendship when the difficult decision about migration was taken. The family ties in the group of 1846 are obvious, and the very few emigrants who were not directly related, fall within the category of household members or close friends. They were obviously a closely-knit company, heading for America with the valuable support from people who were dear, and in many ways trying to transplant their home culture into foreign soil. It is another matter that in reality such a transplantation became very difficult. There is little doubt that the flow of eagerly sought information which found its way across the Atlantic in the next decade, for instance through the letters from relatives and friends in America, may have triggered decisions among remaining members of the *Igland*-tribe, and helped new prospective emigrants along the way.

The following survey of emigrants and their destination in America, gives the names of husband and wife, and also children in the instances where they are linked to other Igland people through marriage. The basis for the information is found in the present *Index* and *Iglandsætten*.¹⁵

3.2 THE FAMILY WEB

Wisconsin, 1844:

Beruld Christensen Fiskvatøy

Cousin to Kittel O. Igland and Terje Larsen Skredderstøa and Anne Larsdatter Langsæhøvet

m.t. Odborg Nilsdatter

Salve Tallaksen Igland Birkedal

Lars Tallaksen Igland's brother

m.t. Gunnhild Salvesdatter

¹⁵ In his preface to *Iglandsætten*, Nils Igland wrote in 1898: *For a long time I have been working on collecting a register of my family, whose members have had the Igland farm as their home, with indications as to how the family has spread out beyond the home district. At the request of several people I now let my notes appear in print in order to make them available to all those who are interested in our ancestors' name and memory. Since I have not had the time or the opportunity to collect information everywhere from official records, the notes may be incomplete, especially when it comes to the records of years of birth and other dates, but I assume that those concerned, who get the book, will know themselves how to correct this by binding a number of blank pages at the right place upon which corrections and continued family records may be written. In that way it can certainly become a dear little family book for future generations.* My translation. The information collected by Nils Igland is also used by Tveiten, op. cit.: 129-137.

Missouri, 1846:**Osuld Nielsen Enge**

m.t. Gunhild Terjesdatter

child: Gurine

Son of Niels Pedersen Igland

Daughter of Terje Osuldsen Haaland; cousin to her husband

Married to Lars Nielsen Haabesland

Andreas Nielsen Igland Holte

m.t. Gjertrud Omundsdatter

Hans Ommundsen Espægren

Alette Ommundsdatter

Son of Niels Pedersen Igland (Osuld Enge's brother)

Gjertrud's brother

Gjertrud's sister

Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven

m.t. Karen Marthea Olsdatter

children: Nels Peter

Jørgen

Olava

Sara

Son of Niels Pedersen Igland Dolholt; Osul Enge and Anders Holte's cousin

Married to Inger Tomine Haaversen Stensvand

Married to Aase Guttormsen Thompson

Married to Ole S. Stiansen

Married to Ole Mathias Dannevik

Lars Haaversen Stensvand

m.t. Kristianne Kittelsdatter

children: Haaver

Johannes

Inger Tomine

Married to Maren Hansdatter, widow after Nicolai Guttormsen Gjennestad

Married to Aaselle Nelson, Peder Nelson Kalvehaven's daughter

Married to Nels Peter, Peder Nelson Kalvehaven's son

Knut Haaversen Østerhus

m.t. Astri Iversdatter

Lars H. Stensvand's brother

Osuld Kittelsen Igland

m.t. Torine Berulvsdatter

Lars Nielsen Haabesland

Married to Gurine Osulsdatter, Osul Enge's daughter

Osuld Andersen Løvaasen

m.t. Maren Nilsdatter Igland

child: Gunborg

Osul Enge and Anders Holte's sister

Married to Ole Mathias Dannevik, widower after Sara Nelson Kalvehaven

Olve (?) Clemmetsen

m.t. Maren Henriksdatter

Son of Helene Olsdatter Igland

Gunder Terkelsen Skiftenes
m. t. Margrethe Nielsdatter

Daughter of Niels Knudsen Igland

Thorkild Ånonsen Rislå

His brother was married to Marthe Tellefsdal Igland

Wisconsin, 1849:

Birthe Halvorsdatter Kiland
Anne Halvorsdatter Kiland

Mrs. Osuld Pedersen Igland's sister
Mrs. Osuld Pedersen Igland's sister

Lars Tallaksen Igland

Son of Tallak Larsen Igland, and Salve Tallaksen's brother

Gunnhild Salvesdatter Igland

Parents emigrated in 1844

Missouri, 1849:

Kittel Osuldsen Igland

Son of Osuld K. Igland, Beruld Fiskvatøy and Osuld Enge's uncle

m. t. Karen Pedersdatter Gjennestad

Torjus Pedersen Hesnes Birkedal

m.t. Birthe Kitteldatter

Kittel Osludsen Igland's daughter

Clemmet Tørrisen Langsæhovet

m.t. Anne Larsdatter

Kittel Osuldsen Igland's niece

Ole Clemmetsen Solberg

m.t. Åsle Larsdatter

Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven and Ole Nielsen Rørmoen's niece

Engel Stenersen Skiftenes

m.t. Maren Øvensdatter

Daughter of Maren Rasmusdatter Igland

Even Gjeruldsen Hørte

His brother, Salve, was married to Åse Pedersdatter Igland, whose uncle was Osul Nielsen Enge

Terje Andreas Christiansen Enge

m. t. Maren Øvensdatter
Ingeborg Andreasdatter

Daughter of Maren Rasmusdatter Igland
Terje Enge's mother

Missouri, 1850:

Ole Mathias Dannevik

m.t. Sara Kalvehaven

Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven's daughter

Ole Nilsen Igland Lia

Son of Nils Pedersen Igland; Osuld Enge and Anders Holte's brother

- m.t. Anne Hansdatter Daughter of Hans Osuldsen Igland; married to her cousin
- Ole Nielsen Rørmoen** Son of Niels Pedersen Dolholt; Peder Kalvehaven's brother
- m.t. Anne Olsdatter
- Terje Larsen Skredderstøa** Kittel Osuldsen Igland's cousin
- m.t. Anne Gundersdatter
- The following four men were brothers and sons of Guttorm Pedersen Gjennestad; Peder Kalvehaven and Osul Enge's cousins
- Gunder Guttormsen Steine**
m.t. Jacobia Reichelt
child: Birthe Marie Married to Lars Nielsen Igland Øye
- Peder Guttormsen Gjennestad**
m.t. Karen Bentsdatter
- Nicolai Guttormsen Steine**
m.t. Maren Hansdatter Daughter of Hans Osuldsen Igland; she later married Hover Hoverson (Haaversen), son of Lars Haaversen Stensvand
- Niels Guttormsen Tingstveitkjerret**
m.t. Ingeborg Hansdatter Daughter of Hans Osuldsen Igland
- Berthe Gundersdatter Gjennestad** Their mother
- Ole Stiansen Gåskjenn**
m.t. Ingeborg Olsdatter
children: Ole Married to Olava (Laura), Peder Kalvehaven's daughter
Anne Marie Married to Ole Eriksen
Thomas Guttorm Married to Amalie Gurine, Lars Haabesland's daughter
- Sigrid Olsdatter Svensen** Daughter of Gunvor Kittelsdatter Igland (Åmli)
- Gunborg Torjusdatter Reiersølmoen** Daughter of Berthe Knudsdatter Igland (Åmli)
- Minnesota, 1853:**
- Knud Terjesen Stalleland**
m.t. Marthe Olsdatter Daughter of Berthe Rasmusdatter Igland (Hunsdal)

Missouri, 1853:**Guttorm Jensen Espestøl**

m. t. Maren Pedersdatter

Daughter of Peder Torjussen Igland

Minnesota, 1854:**Osuld Terjesen Haaland**

m.t. Åse Rasmusdatter

Cousin to Anders Osuldsen Igland Løvaasen; his aunt was married to Osul Nielsen Enge

Missouri, 1854:**Knud Nielsen Haabesland**

m.t. Helene Olsdatter

His brother was married to Gurine, Osul Nielsen Enge's daughter

Ole Geruldsen Nævisdal**Knud Gjeruldsen Nævisdal****Gjeruld Kittelsen Nævisdal****Johannes Kittelsen Nævisdal**

All four related to Osuld Gjeruldsen Igland

Missouri, 1856:**Gunder Guttormsen Birkedal Ronnen**

m.t. Anne Torjusdatter

His great-grandfather was Guttorm Osuldsen Igland

In the period 1844 to 1856, 221 persons of *Igland*-stock emigrated to Wisconsin, Minnesota and Missouri. Of these three states, Missouri was clearly a favourite choice for people related to the *Igland*-tribe. The 1850 Federal Census for Missouri states that at the time of the recording, there were 150 Norwegians in the state. This figure is probably inaccurate; a close reading of the returns from Buchanan County alone shows 132 Norwegians. By 1856, the number of members of the Igland family in Missouri, or people who had married into the family, was 193. In other words, there is no doubt that the Igland family dominated the settlement in and near St. Joseph, and represented the major share of Norwegian-born immigrants in Missouri up to at least 1856.

At the end of the 1850s a number of people from the St. Joseph settlement had moved across the Missouri, had found better land and settled near Troy in the state of Kansas. From that time on, the influx of new Norwegian immigrants to St. Joseph was on the decline and

too meagre to uphold St. Joseph's position as a relatively large and expanding Norwegian settlement. On the other hand, the descendants Peder Kalvehaven particularly, constituted a stable and prosperous element in the town, and it is noteworthy that his son's farm,¹⁶ now known as the *Nelson-Pettis Homestead*, is one of the very few farms in Missouri which has seen continuous management by one single family up to this day.

¹⁶ Jørgen, or George as he was called in America, took over a section of his father original 850 acres, and built a brickhouse there about 1870. The house still stands, and is to day under state protection as a "historic district". Agricultural produce now consists of mainly corn and soy-beans.

**CHAPTER IV:
THE EMERGENCE OF
MODERN NORWAY**

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The members of the “Landvik-group” who headed for America in 1846, were mainly peasants and their families, and bachelors who were sons of peasants or made a living as farm-hands. On the background of the composition of the company, it is natural to let an outer concentric circle of interest concentrate on the role of the farmers and peasants in the young nation in the 19th century. Many of the changes which gained footholds in the rural areas of Norway in the first part of the century would have direct bearing on the trends and mechanisms which loosened old bonds and made emigration from a stable and cemented society a possible option.

4.2 A NEW-BORN NATION

When the new dawn came to nascent the new-born nation in 1814, national sovereignty and political freedom were no doubt basic and tightly intervoven values. The turbulent year which had brought Norway all the way from a 400-year-union with Denmark, via a short-lived independence and then into the arms of a conquering Sweeden, may also be seen as the opening of modern times, a process that was slow, timid and uncertain in the beginning, but which accelerated and had found its momentum by 1850.

Both from an administrative and a financial perspective, the nation developed and grew into a coherent entity. The first part of the 19th century set the scene for a stronger economic development and a more thorough social transformation than the country had ever witnessed in its history.

The growth of the population was remarkable: from 0.9 million around 1800 to 2.2 million a hundred years later. In the same period there was a characteristic movement from rural areas into the blooming towns and villages along the coast. Tied to this fundamental change were also the first signs of the relative decline in importance of the primary industry of farming.

Up to around 1860 two basic characteristics of social organization should be mentioned: stability and paternalism. In the upheaval of social transformation these values first came under attack in the towns, but were perhaps more deeply rooted and persistent in rural communities.

In particular the rural communities were by tradition firmly built on a vertical pattern. It was a pattern that was hereditary and basic, a structure that was founded on authority and subordination. In such a rigid scheme you inherited your social position, and the distance to those above and below you made crossings and climbings literally impossible.

From birth to death you had your defined place in society; in your household you were ranked in the vertical pattern based on authority and subordination; there were seemingly insurmountable distances between people as far as standard of living, income, education, language, dress, and social relations were concerned. Put differently, you were granted assistance and protection from above as a compensation for your own humble loyalty.

Thus, a three-layered social division was basic; in the rural communities the stable organization would be made up of

- Civil servants and landowners
- Farmers
- Crofters, servants, old and perhaps incapacitated family relations (*innerster*) and the poor.

At the coming of modern times, a two-layered stratification emerged. The middle 1800s witnessed the establishment of a broader middle class and a struggling new proletariat. In the country we find a clear and broadening class distinction between the haves and have-nots, those with land and those without. There was a massive shift to freeholding farmers who closed their ranks and cemented their fences. They were firmly and securely established in their very local realms, and as early as the 1840s trying to cope with the uneasiness of seeing their restricted farming areas in the future split between too many healthy successors.

The aftermath of the struggle for freedom and sovereignty in 1814 was not an easy one. In fact, the whole 19th century may be seen as a series of clashes and conflicts, on a national level, and with local repercussions. But at the same time there was also a growing sense of national identity built on a celebrated common past and the experience of economic growth, new initiatives and a spreading belief in the future.

At the core, the history of Norway in the 19th century is one of a struggle for power and dominance. At the mercy of European super-powers, the re-born nation awoke to a host of economic, social, and structural problems. Challenges from neighbouring countries found

their parallel in internal problems: King vs. government and *Storting*, state vs. local government, region vs. region, civil servants vs. farmers, development vs. tradition.

Central to this all-embracing process, was the position of the farmers. The Constitution of 1814 had through the rules of voting given them the tools for power. They grasped this opportunity slowly and hesitantly, staying remarkably loyal to the King, but eventually, by the 1880s, burst the bonds of their peasant community, and became instrumental in the overthrow of the civil-servant dominance and the establishment of parliamentarism.

4.3 A TROUBLESOME FREEDOM - THE AFTERMATH OF 1814

As the Napoleonic Wars came to an end at the beginning of the 19th century, the spoils of war were distributed among the winners and their supporters. Thus the Danish King was forced to surrender Norway into the hands of Sweden. The treaty of Kiel in 1814 then marked the end of a 400-year-union between Denmark and Norway; it had been a stable partnership, giving Norway a constant influx of Danish-trained and mostly Danish-born civil servants, and setting up Danish culture as the model and ideal. In many ways it had been a fruitful and amiable union with a benevolent King in far-away Copenhagen. There was far more scepticism and even animosity when Sweden took over the reins.

The new political situation gave rise to independence movements, which in their turn was the background of the national assembly at Eidsvoll in 1814. In the spring, 112 representatives from Southern Norway met (communications were so bad that North Norway was left out). Finding their ideals in fairly recent revolutions in France and America, the assembly split in two, *Selvtendighetspartiet* (the Independence Party) and *Unionspartiet* (the Union Party).

Despite these evident differences of opinion, a constitution was hammered out, establishing the new-born nation as a democracy headed by a King, namely the Danish prince Christian Fredrik. However, high hopes for freedom and sovereignty were shortlived, and soon Christian Fredrik realized that he must give up his ambitions, and sadly see the Swedish King Carl Johan ascend the throne.

The Constitution proved to be solid rock. Swedish ambitions for full dominance were fiercely met, and it soon turned out that the union rather came to be of a personal than a real

character. National and political freedom stood fast, and the seeds of sovereignty came to their full bloom in 1905 when the union finally came to an end.

The Constitution of 1814 gave the free-holding peasants ample possibilities to exert influence on Norwegian politics. They had been given the right to vote, but were slow in exploiting this tool for power. In a patriotic view, the farmer was honoured and respected as a carrier of customs and practices of the forefathers.¹ In many ways he represented what was truly national, and to follow, a tradition for political freedom. The independent and autonomous farmer was the cornerstone of the new democracy.²

The idea of a “peasant-state” of free-holding farmers and peasants was well-known to many of the Norwegian “Founding Fathers”, not least Christian Magnus Falsen. The concept had been brought over from America as part of the ideals and ideas found in the American Constitution. Parallel to their American colleagues, Norwegian politicians found no basic incompatibility between the notions of a “state of citizens” and a “state of farmers”.

The majority of peasants seemed indifferent to the events of 1814. In the short run, they regarded the political situation in Norway as one of status quo: whether the civil servants managed the national affairs in the name of the King, or by virtue of the Constitution, mattered little. To most people in the countryside, life went on as always.³

4.4 KING – GOVERNMENT – NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

From the outset, King Carl Johan tried to exploit the inherent tensions between the farmer politicians and the dominant class of civil servants. In addition to such rather petty manoeuvring, the King also sought to rally the super-powers of Europe behind his plans to fully dominate Norway, but found little enthusiasm. Up to his death in 1844, the King’s zeal diminished, but all the same brought about serious crises on at least two occasions, in 1821 and 1824.

In 1818 farmers from the eastern districts rallied in front of the Storting, and even offered the King absolute monarchy, but the King wisely dismissed the idea. It is, however,

¹ Francis Sejersted. *Den vanskelige frihet*, volume 10, Knut Mykland, ed., *Norges Historie* (Oslo: Cappelen, 1978): 11.

² Ibid.

³ Tore Pryser. *Norsk historie 1800-1870: Frå standsamfunn til klassesamfunn* (Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 1985): 231.

interesting to note that the farmers still upheld their most loyal view that the King could be approached and reasoned with. In 1821 the King brought together troops to control the situation, and there were rumours of a coming coup, but the affair came to nothing.

The first decades of the 19th century were marked by the strife between an ambitious King, the Storting groping to find its function and character, and with the government in an unhappy mid-position. As the King came to realize that his Norwegian subjects were cementing their own institutions, both the Storting and the government strengthened their positions versus the King, and from about 1840 the Storting consolidated its powerbase in relation to the government.

Generally speaking, a small portion of the population took part in the political process associated with the national assembly. For a number of years after 1814, the assembly was dominated by the civil servants, well-educated and conscious of their prominent position in the emerging, modern Norway. To a large extent, the rural population who had been given the right to vote, put their trust in the civil servants, and were for a time reluctant to exploit their own potential political powers.

At the election in 1815, 39 civil servants were elected, while 29 farmers took seats in the Storting. On the whole, these farmers were silent witnesses to the proceedings of the assembly.⁴ By 1832 the situation was on the point of changing: 45 farmers were elected, whereas the number of civil servants had slumped to 33.⁵ Behind this shift in numbers lies a profound change in the rural electorate. A new attitude was breaking through, farmers were at long last willing to use the powers given them in the Constitution, and agitators like Jon Neergaard had shown them the importance of using the right to vote to their own benefit.

The Storting of 1832 has been labelled radical, and for certain this is the first time that one might see the contours of the policies that were to characterize and dominate the attitudes of Norwegian farmers: the support of the idea of half-democratic local communities, the adherence to the prudent ideal of "saving money" (as opposed to investment and use), the following of the aim of cutting taxes and public expenditure, and, for the sake of defending

⁴ Sejersted, op. cit.: 35.

⁵ Bernt A. Nissen. *Vårt folks historie, VI* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1964): 281.

their own industries, the raising of customs duties on imported goods. One might say that it was all part of a process of shifting burdens from rural areas to the towns.

The election of 1838 marked a temporary setback for the farmers' influence in the assembly, but by 1845 they were back in full numbers led by the charismatic Ole Gabriel Ueland.

On the whole, the rural representatives achieved quite a lot in the 1830s and 40s. On a national level, one should mention the establishment of local self-government, the curtailing of town privileges, and the repeal of state taxes. On the local level, battles were fought over the setting aside of civil servants in processes of determining the value of farming properties, and the right of the *Formannskap* (local executive committee) to appoint sheriffs.

To use Ueland's own words, they wanted "strict and vigerous control of the civil servants of the realm".⁶ With those words, the basic political conflict of the 1840s and 50s in terms of group interests was set: civil servants vs. farmers.

4.5 THE POWER OF THE BUREAUCRACY

The civil servants moulded the constitution of 1814. They were in the forefront in the struggle for independence, and later took the heavy burdens in the prolonged fight to consolidate the eagerly-sought sovereignty. With the absence of a class of nobility, they came to make up an upper class, very much alone in that part of the pitch, since the patricians in the sea-faring towns had broken their backs in the financial crises around the turn of the century. Political power in the years after 1814 was to a large extent centred on those who had exercised such power in the 18th century under the absolutist Danish monarchy, the civil servants who included both clergy and the traditional bureaucracy. There were evidently a good deal of intertwining family bonds, and access to higher education was more or less restricted to this class. In many ways, these officials had become a kind of hereditary office-holding aristocracy. Two other groups controlled economic life: the wealthier landowning farmers (*bønder*), and the burghers (*borgere*), men of the towns and ports. All three groups had their own status symbols and an internal hierarchy. In popular opinion all of these were, however, regarded as *de conditionerte*, a notion close to the "upper-class". They were set apart from the largely disenfranchised commonality (*almuen*), the poor, the inarticulate, and the powerless of town and countryside.

⁶ Quoted by Sejersted, op. cit.:356. My translation.

The civil servants constituted a fairly small but powerful group. In 1845 their number was 1,970, i.e. between $\frac{1}{2}$ and 1% of the total population,⁷ and the group was made up of officials from the bureaucracy and the administration, such as bailiffs, sheriffs, district recorders, lawyers, and vicars. The voting rules given in the Constitution set the principle that $\frac{2}{3}$ of the representatives in the Storting must come from the rural districts. In other words, political power was within easy grasp of free-holding farmers who wanted a political career. The strong position of the civil servants in the Storting must therefore be due to the fact that other electoral groups closed ranks around them. To put it bluntly, farmers trusted their civil servants and elected them to the national assembly. This was the situation well into the 1830s when the rural electorate eventually took strides in the direction of a belated political awareness.

When the rural representatives literally marched into the Storting in 1838, the civil servants found this threatening, not only to their own positions, but also because they found the farmers rather ill-educated and self-centered. Roughly speaking, the civil servants prided themselves in setting national considerations first: moderizing the nation, bringing order to the monetary system, keeping inflation under control, and for instance establishing the Bank of Norway through the decree of a “silver-tax” in 1816.

The farmers, on the other hand, wanted a shift in power from the elitist ranks of the civil servants to a form of democratic local self-government. Generally, they found the burden of taxation too heavy, and sought through various means of import duties to defend their primary interests of farming, forestry, and to a certain extent, fishing.

One example of this shift in power was the passing of the so-called *Formannskapslovene* in 1837. This law regulated local government, and represented a possible transfer of power to local groups.

Prior to 1837, the towns had developed governing bodies of *eligerede*, i.e. a group of trusted aldermen. The rural communities, on the other hand, had less developed forms of local government. There existed, it is true, commissions for poor relief and school boards with protocol and their own budget, in addition to some general meetings at the churches, but only in 1837 did both town and countryside get their elected and representative *formannskap*

⁷ Ibid.: 275.

(executive boards) with well-defined obligations and responsibilities in such areas as church, school, and social affairs.

It is noteworthy that the rural population in general took rather little interest in the affairs of local government, and therefore participation in local elections was low.

Most of the economic and social privileges were abolished in the period 1840-1875. In this context the passing of two important judicial thrusts should be mentioned:

- The first attack on class privileges came in 1839 with *Håndverksloven*, doing away with the crafts unions, and making private enterprise easier. The towns thereby lost their monopolies.
- *Handelsloven* in 1842 put an end to the five different classes of citizenship, thus making trade easier. Foreign trade was, however, still a town monopoly.

In the process of doing away with these privileges (the Allodial Rights Act remained untouched) the farmers on the whole gained more than other groups.

4.6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The years around 1814 were tough times. The Napoleonic Wars brought hardship from about 1807, crops failed, supplies were scarce, and markets were closed for export. The affluent and golden years about the turn of the century did not come back easily. In fact, the first half of the 19th century must be regarded as a period of reconstruction. By 1850 the losses of war had been mended, a fairly strong financial basis had been established, and the population was in the midst of a remarkable growth, from 0.9 to 1.8 million in 60 years, relatively speaking the strongest growth of the European nations.⁸ Michael Drake has shown that the population almost doubled in the 50 years after 1815. The growth of the population took the form of an explosion, “a rate of 1.4% per annum in the years 1815-35 followed by one of 1.1% in the period 1835-55 and 1.3% from 1855-65”.⁹

After the setback of the wars in Europe, agricultural production was directed towards a growing market, at the same time as inland consumption increased and people even started buying articles from abroad. This is the period when one sees for the first time a budding and

⁸ Pryser, op. cit.: 99.

⁹ Michael Drake. *Population and Society in Norway 1735-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969): 41.

driving force in the economy. Trade flourished, and even the farmers directed their carts and carriages towards the towns and the lure of making a profit. The exchange of goods and commodities required specialized and more traders. As a result the number of merchants particularly in the towns grew, and thereby destroyed the monopoly of trade which had formerly been in the hands of a wealthy patriciate.

The financial headache in the years that followed 1814 was in great measure centred on the problems of a lack of stability and predictability in monetary affairs. *Norges Bank* (the Bank of Norway) saw as its primary goal to fight inflation and to defend the value of its banknotes. The bank itself had been founded on the basis of the unpopular silver-tax. The *spesidaler* had its value fixed to silver at nominal value in 1842, and this contributed at paving the way for economic expansion.¹⁰

Around 1840 it was clear that Norway had taken decisive steps in the direction of liberalism and modern capitalism. Generally speaking, the trend was to move away from state regulations towards free enterprise and free competition, even to open up for foreign competition at the expense of tariff protection and privileges. When England repealed her Navigation Act in 1849, Norwegian shipowners were quick to take advantage of the new situation, and soon Norwegian shipping interests were in the forefront of world trade.

The first part of the 19th century was marked by a considerable, yet uneven, economic growth. The young Norwegian economy was vulnerable, and suffered temporary setbacks parallel to fluctuations in shipping and lumber trade, and changing crops in agriculture. In the process of moving away from a closed, state-controlled economy, the new liberal trends gave rise to an expansive export: in the period 1835-45, the growth in foreign trade reached 3.3% p.a.¹¹

In sum, there were several factors that brought Norway in the direction of capitalism, industrialization and liberalism in this period; impulses from Europe were strong: revolts and revolutions in central European countries, freer and expanding enterprises, easier access to capital, better general terms for industry, and growing markets at home and abroad. There is no doubt that Norway saw a strong rise in both population and economy after 1800.

¹⁰ Rolf Danielsen, ed. *Grunntrekk i norsk historie* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1991): 202.

¹¹ Sejersted, op. cit.: 244.

Production in agriculture as well as fisheries increased markedly after 1830, as did the returns in shipping and lumber trade.

The important question is then, how did this situation affect the individual? Fritz Hodne has argued that the growth in population was less than the growth in the national economy: in the period 1835-45 the population increased by 1.3%, whereas production rose by 1.5%.¹²

It is of course, however, difficult to decide whether the general public experienced better material conditions up to about 1850. It is probable that many saw such an improved situation, and after 1850 there is hardly any doubt that living conditions improved greatly. Up to about 1850, the greater part of the increased population had to find its employment in agriculture. Farming was the basic industry, and the increased agricultural production gave better nourishment. In many parts of the country, farming was supported by subsidiary activities within fishing, seafaring, forestry, and various crafts. This meant that free-holding farmers experienced better days, but the situation for crofters and day-workers was of a more precarious nature.

Sociologist Eilert Sundt sums up the situation of the 1840s: to him this was *en Fremskridtid og en Trængselstid* – a time of progress and a time of distress.¹³ At the same time as the national development gave increased production and income, the individual often had to go through hardships and distress in coping with the demands for a daily outcome. This is not least true for the growing group of workers in the towns, where industrialization and capitalism set the pace. In the rural districts also the modern trends had their way smoothed through the transference to a market-oriented economy, new and better communications, an increased mobility, education, and the possibility of getting bank loans for investments.

4.7 THE RISE OF PEASANT POWER

When Norwegian farmers flowed into the Storting from 1832 onwards, they did not constitute themselves as a uniform or united political block. It is difficult to see any superior perspectives in their dealings in the national assembly. It was more a case of centering their interests on some few and basic problems: taxation and public cost-cutting. Thereby their policies often had an anti-bureaucratic content.

¹² Quoted by Sejersted, op. cit.: 243.

¹³ Quoted by Pryser, op. cit.: 120.

In many respects the farmers stood for relatively conservative attitudes. They were loyal royalists, who did not want to extend the right to vote, were sceptical towards the Jews, cautious in financial affairs, defensive of the privileges of land-owners, and satisfied to play a role as opposition in the Storting. At the same time, there was undoubtedly a radical undercurrent among them that often worried and spread a kind of uneasiness among their opponents, i.e. the civil servants.

In 1832 Jon Neergaard published the so-called *Ola-boka*, a pamphlet that was the first instance of political agitation in Norway. It represented a harsh attack on the civil servants who had won a seat in the National Assembly, and who afterwards had taken the opportunity to increase their own salaries and the national budget. At the same time, Neergaard would argue, the peasants had become increasingly impoverished. One should not regard Neergaard and his likes (Soelvold, Barlien, Hoel) as representatives of mainstream farmers' interests. They were often marginal, yet outspoken, but at the core there is a sort of lowest common multiple: there was a tendency in the agrarian society to see a permanent and necessary conflict between the peasants and the privileged interests of an upper class, namely the civil servants.¹⁴

When Ole Gabriel Ueland emerged as a dominant leader among the farmers in the 1840s, many of the tendencies of the 1830s were carried on, as was the case when Søren Jaabæk became the unquestioned leader. They wanted a small and cheap state-administration, were narrowly interested in defending their own interests (the use of protective tariffs and duties), were anti-bureaucratic, wanted to wing-clip the civil servants, and were in their hearts opposed to the liberal trends of their times.

4.8 INTO MODERN TIMES: THE GROWTH OF THE POPULATION

From about 1750 the countries of Western Europe witnessed a remarkable growth in their populations. The same was true in Norway, in fact after the harsh years of the Napoleonic Wars, the tide turned around 1815 and up to 1865 the rate of growth in Norway was unique in a European context.

At the end of the 18th century the annual growth of the population in Norway held steady at 0.7%; during the wars the rate slumped to 0.4%, but rose in the period 1815-1865 to

¹⁴ Sejersted, op. cit.: 336.

a striking 1,3%.¹⁵ In other words, we are talking about an explosion of the population: a near doubling in 50 years, from 900,000 to 1.7 million. At the same time food production also grew in such a manner that it exceeded the growing number of Norwegians. The strong growth of the population was one of the main causes behind the historic processes in the 19th century.

There was a slow but steady move from the countryside into the towns that dotted the coast. In 1801 8.8% of the population lived in towns, by 1855 the percentage had risen to 13.3.¹⁶ The 1845 census shows that 1,166,596 people lived in the rural areas, whereas a mere 161,875 lived in the small towns.¹⁷ In his sociological studies Eilert Sundt discovered the principle that the variations in the number of births were linked to cyclic waves. Crests occurred in 1760, 1790, 1820 and 1850, in other words every third decade. Sundt went on to show that the birth rate was dependent upon the age distribution of the population.¹⁸

In his rather pessimistic vision Thomas Malthus would argue that reproduction was stronger than the possibility to increase food production. It was a normal thing to live on a subsistence minimum. Only wars, epidemics and starvation could stem the tides of growing populations. After a journey to Norway he modified his views, realizing that it was possible to regulate the number of births.¹⁹

4.9 LIFE EXPECTANCY

Closely connected to the issue of a rapidly growing population, is of course the fact that the rate of mortality sank. The chances of living longer were better, and lower infant mortality was one of the main causes for a prolonged lifespan. In 1801 the mortality rate was 27.6/ 1000 pr. year; in 1880 the figure was 16.2/ 1000. Around 1700 the average Norwegian lived 35 years; in the period 1821-50 his life would be about 45 years, and in 1880 close to 50 years.²⁰

¹⁵ Sejersted, op. cit.:100. Pryser, op. cit., sets the figure at 1,9%. There is general agreement among historians that the census returns are of varying credibility: 1801 is good, 1815, 1825, 1835, 1845 are more doubtful, whereas 1865 is good.

¹⁶ Sejersted, op. cit.: 114.

¹⁷ Sejersted, op. cit.: 342.

¹⁸ Eilert Sundt. "Dødeligheden i Norge"(Christiania, 1855).

¹⁹ Thomas Malthus. "An Essay on the Principle of Population" (London: J. Johnson, 1798).

www.ac.wvu.edu/~stephan/mathus/malthus.0.htm . Also: www.esp.org/books/malthus/population/malthus.pdf and www.marxists.org/reference/subject/economics/malthus/index.htm

²⁰ Pryser, op. cit.: 30.

The causes of this remarkable situation are of course interwoven and complex. In the main one might point to a cluster of explanations:

- The economic development was on the rise and gave a majority of the population a better chance to secure a better and easier life for themselves and their kin.
- Tied to the growing prosperity was the possibility of buying more nutritious food, and even more important, the supply and access to two basic sources of food: the potato which had been introduced to the country in the 18th century, and the herring which gave immensely rich catches along the south-western coast. Together they made provision for a vital contribution of A and C vitamins, necessary to put up a successful fight against tuberculosis.
- Health care was also on the move. New hospitals came in use, a system of state-appointed physicians in the rural districts was introduced, and a vaccine against small-pox proved more than useful. General hygiene took a step forward, and housing conditions were improved. It has also been hinted that Norway experienced a milder epidemic situation in the middle of the 19th century.²¹
- In a more general sense, the bettering of social organization and communications may have had their say.

It was a time when death in a sense loosened its grip, when the growth in food production surpassed that of an exploding population, and which in the words of Eilert Sundt led to *en overordentlig forøget Slægt* : an immensely increased generation.²²

4.10 THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE

Inge Krokan, well-known Norwegian author, first used the term *hamskifte* about the fundamental and drastic changes that occurred in the rural districts around the middle of century. It was indeed a metamorphosis of both structures and a way of life that took place, a peaceful revolution that brought rural Norway into modern times and left century-old habits behind.

The deep changes did not, however, happen in a rapid or dramatic manner; they were gradual and came about over time. But since the background was one of a stagnant society, where stability had reigned for centuries, the transformation was felt as radical and revolutionary. The rural economy became integrated in a modern market oriented economy, and on a practical level, development was brought forward in leaps by means of better tools

²¹ Sejersted, op. cit.: 111.

²² Ibid., 112.

and equipment, growing markets in the towns, new possibilities of financial support and credit, free trade, better communications, and a better standard of education.

The shift in the population pattern mirrors a growth and transformation process in Norwegian economy that accelerated around 1840, and which in combination with emigration, prevented the country from ending up in a “malthusian trap” where the growth of the population suffocated all economic progress. The pressure of a growing population led to movement and departure: there was a steady flow of people leaving the districts and moving into the towns.²³ From about 1870 emigration to America contributed greatly to taking the steam from the kettle. Generally speaking, landowning farmers and peasants and their children moved overseas to America, whereas crofters and their children took the cheap way to North-Norway.

In 1801, 85% of the people fully or partly got their livelihood from agriculture.²⁴ In the years up to 1850 the greater part of the increase in the population had to earn their living through activities related to rural industries: farming, forestry and fishing. The key question was then: could the rural districts accommodate an increased number of people without jeopardizing resources and thereby suffering from falling productivity? The answer is no, and a considerable number of young people were literally forced to seek their fortune in other parts of the country than their native farm and family district.

The pressure of an increased population led to the breaking of bonds and widespread movement in the form of migration. The future must have looked more uncertain than earlier despite the fact that the nation was acquiring more wealth on its way towards a modern society. The situation for many young people therefore became ambiguous: in the light of increased national wealth, the possibility of moving up in society was paralleled by the risk of social degradation.

The first of the great waves of internal migration hit the job market in the 1840s. Prospects became grimmer, the situation tightened, and many thought they envisioned a bleak future.

²³ 1815: 11-12% of the population lived in towns; 1845: 15%; 1875: 25%. Rolf Davidsen, ed. *Grunntrekk i norsk historie. Fra vikingtid til våre dager*: 192.

²⁴ *Ibid.*: 193.

In an article, Kjell Haarstad has formulated a key question in the discussion of the relation between agricultural development and emigration:²⁵

*Was it the mowing machine which pushed the peasant overseas to America, or was it the emigration which pressed the farmers to buy the American mowing machine?*²⁶

Haarstad claims that Norwegian agriculture from about 1850, as “always”, was characterized by the reliance upon a satisfactory harvest. Production on the farms was extensive in the sense that it required large areas, but gave low returns despite the use of numerous farmhands. This was true for agriculture, even in a “marginalized” country like Norway, where the farmers saw it as their main goal to sow grain and plant potatoes. This was quite a primitive operation, with no variation in crops, a minimal use of fertilizers, and the use of old-fashioned wooden ploughs and other tools. The harvest was meagre. The yield was four to five times for oats, six to seven times for barley.²⁷ According to Haarstad, the main implication of the agricultural revolution was a transition from extensive to intensive operations. This implied a gradual reduction of a quite dicey agriculture, at the advantage of fodder-production.

Based on the number of mechanical innovations in agriculture, and when these inventions were introduced in Norway, Haarstad’s conclusion is clear: The crofter was not pushed overseas because of new farming machines.²⁸ The new machines simply came too late for that.

But the second part of the questions remains: Was emigration a driving force behind the modernization of Norwegian agriculture? Haarstad is tempted to say a clear “yes”. Labour resources were drained so hard that the alternatives were, to put it bluntly, modernize or close down. Emigration had taken away the reserves which an agriculture based on harvesting was reliant upon; rationalization and modernization forced their way through. The machines had to replace the willing hands gone overseas.

4.11 THE SAFETY-VALVE: EMIGRATION

Since the 1930s, when research into Norwegian emigration started, certain issues have caught the most interest. In the forefront there is probably the question of causes: why did people emigrate?

²⁵ Kjell Haarstad. ”Utvandrerne fra bygdene – presset eller lokket?” Arnfinn Engen. *Utvandringa – det store oppbrotet* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1978): 38-56.

²⁶ *Ibid.*: 39. My translation.

²⁷ *Ibid.*: 39.

²⁸ *Ibid.*: 47.

In this discussion it has been customary to distinguish between the so-called basic causes, conditions which made emigration a realistic alternative to remaining in Norway, and the trigger-off-causes, which in their turn enabled people to reach the final decision to emigrate, in other words, matters which decided the actual time for emigration. In this respect, one should mention a number of crises within agriculture (bad years) and business (business cycles).

The growth of the population in the 19th century, and the profound changes in farming from about 1840 have traditionally been counted as the two basic causes for emigration.²⁹ The rapid and steady growth of the populations in Western-Europe started around 1800, and found its momentum in Norway from about 1815. Behind this dramatic increase, one finds a decline in the rate of mortality, first and foremost among children. Linked to this development are factors like: improvements in agriculture (which boosted food supplies), the transformation of an agrarian society into an industrialized one, a revolution within communications, and the founding of a public health service.

The increase of the population gave the material for emigration, and the emigrants in their turn helped provide food for Europe, and in that way made possible a continued increase in the population, a spreading industrialization, and new waves of emigration.³⁰

In Norway emigration to America began in rural districts on the western fjords, and in the mountainous areas in the east. Those were local communities where the economic base was hard pressed, and where extra sustenance in the form of fishing, maritime activities, and new crofters' farms were scarce. In such a situation, people must have felt the lure of abundant, cheap, and fertile soil in America.

In the period from 1836 until the mid 1840s, emigration spread within a limited number of regions, Stavanger, Søndre Bergenhus, Bratsberg, and Buskerud; the core districts were Ryfylke, Voss, Upper and Lower Telemark, and Numedal.³¹ In the official statistics for the years 1836-45, we find that the total number of emigrants was 6,200; the two Agder counties are listed with 0.³²

²⁹ Arnfinn Engen, ed., op. cit.: 8.

³⁰ Ingrid Semmingsen. "Amerikaferd", Engen, ed., op. cit.: 12.

³¹ Andres Svalestuen. "Om den regionale spreinga i norsk utvandring", Engen, ed., op. cit.: 66.

³² Ibid.: 67.

The early emigration in the 1830s and 40s poses a number of questions as to why this migration took place. It has been suggested that shipping traditions and the availability of easy transportation might have been contributing factors. This is probably not fully true, since the emigrants in the initial phase did not come from maritime districts. In the 1840s Norwegian ships had not yet begun to weave their net around the whole globe. In fact, it was easier to get transportation to America from Swedish or French ports than from Norway. One might even turn the argument, and say that emigration became a stimulus for the development of shipping interests.

South-eastern districts in Norway had seen a considerable migration to Holland in the 17th century, but people from this region were more or less absent in the pioneering stages of Norwegian emigration. It was only when the economic crises hit the tall ships from about 1880 that people from the South made a heavy contribution to fill the emigrant ships. The fact remains, however, that people along the southern coast were open-minded travellers in the sense that connections to the European continent were frequent, and the sea was their main road, although their seamen in the 1840s had yet to become the freighters of the world.³³

People in the 1840s, both the emigrants themselves and other observers, are quite clear in their assessment of the causes and motives for emigration. Although all sorts of side-motives are mentioned, broken hearts, religious or political oppression, dissatisfaction with the local bureaucracy, the main motive remains one of economy, of bad financial situations.

*If I, like You, had a property, a herd of cattle, a part in these pastures, or if I could think of acquiring these with my diligence, then I would certainly remain here.... How poor is our harvest, how small and thin our fields!*³⁴

It is likely that reports and letters from America appealed to people in the valleys and in the fjords. The letters written by Gjert Hovland, a farmer from Hardanger, were the first to be copied and distributed, and undoubtedly in some cases led directly to emigration.

“Here is room for everybody”, writes Hovland, “The United States owns an unspeakable amount of land. I have seen no destitute people since I came to this blessed land.” He is also

³³ In 1845, 10 ships arrived in Grimstad from foreign ports, 13 ships left, bound for foreign ports. In the same year, 56 vessels were registered in the Grimstad customs district. In neighbouring Arendal, statistics show the arrival of 42 vessels from foreign ports, and the departure of 48 vessels to foreign ports. 160 vessels were registered in Arendal. Foreign ports most visited were found in Spain, Italy, Austria, and Portugal. Tvethe. *Norges Statistik* (Christiania, 1848): 147, 151.

³⁴ “A letter from Telemark, 1844” *Nordlyset* (Trondheim, 1844). Quoted by Haarstad, op. cit.: 49-50. My translation.

pleased with political issues: “Here is order and we have good laws.” Taxes were small, and there were no “useless burdens”. “There is also freedom in America. You may travel without a passport and one may “use the knowledge and the religion one favours”.³⁵

Gjert Hovland encouraged people to go to America. His message is easy and direct: you may find your livelihood in a simpler and better way, there are no civil servants interfering in local matters, and there are no obstacles to those who want to work as merchants or craftsmen.

It is a generally significant characteristic of the early emigration that individual forerunners and pathfinders played an important role in inspiring and getting the flow running. They were people like Cleng Peerson, Ole Rynning, the Nattestad brothers, J.R.Reiersen, Elise Wærenskjold, and others.

Well before the turn of the century, there had been a fairly steady flow of young and unmarried people from the inner and upper valleys towards the coast. But when the early phase of emigration began, it was different. Now, sedentary families were uprooted, and left their communities which were still self-sufficient, and with little specialization and division of labour. Profits were slight, and public taxation was a burden. It is true that agriculture was advancing, but the pressure of new generations on the resources was formidable. Many must have felt Hovland’s words to be apt; there was a fear that the increasing number of children might grow up in poor and unsatisfactory conditions. These people were not poor in the sense that they were without property. They owned enough to be able to implement their plans for a better life for themselves and their children across the seas.³⁶

The basic motive for emigration then seems to be the hope for a better life. This could be termed a chronic situation, but in addition there were also short-term circumstances which triggered the decision to go. In this respect, various types of crises would constitute a model of explanation.

In the old society there were fundamentally two types of crises. First, crises originating in the fluctuating international business cycles would reach Norway, and show

³⁵ Letter from Gjert Gregoriussen Hovland, dated April 23, 1835. The letter – or a copy – was found at Voss by K.A. Rene. He maintains that this letter circulated in the neighbouring valleys, and was available to those interested in emigration. K.A. Rene. *Historie om utvandringen fra Voss* (Madison, WI: The Anundsen Publishing Company, 1872): 95 ff. My translation.

³⁶ Ingrid Semmingsen, “Amerikaferd”: 16.

themselves in the form of a decline in prices, a lack of money, and bankruptcies. Later came a reduction in wages, reduced production, and unemployment. Second, Norway, like other countries, would occasionally suffer from bad years in agriculture. Such events might be very local and restricted to certain areas and regions.

In an agrarian society which mainly is based upon self-sufficiency and a barter economy, the yearly crops are more important than international business cycles. The Norwegian agrarian society became more and more dependent upon the development of an economic system based on money and not goods in the second half of the 19th century, but around 1850 self-sufficiency was still important. It then follows that the bad years in agriculture play a vital role for the pattern of emigration in the pioneering years. It is typical that almost half of the 17-18,000 men and women who emigrated up to 1850 went overseas in the black years 1849-50.³⁷

Jan Oldervoll has raised the question if it was hunger and starvation which pushed people out of Norway.³⁸ He claims the the years of serious distress and hardship were over at the beginning of the 19th century. Around 1800 life expectancy was well below 45 years. A hundred years later, the figure was above 55 years. This would not indicate that the population had been the subject of starvation. In Oldervoll's view, it was not starvation that pushed people out, but rather the difficulties in finding a livelihood, of supporting one's family.³⁹

The question why life expectancy rose is important first and foremost because the answer is decisive for the discussion about social consequences caused by a growing population. It has been taken for granted that a longer lifespan in preindustrial times had its background in better and easier access to food. A traditional approach would be: in the middle of the 18th century production of food quite suddenly improved. Consequently life expectancy rose. But we know that people mostly found their sustenance in tilling the same soil in 1850 as in 1750. This would imply that the low life expectancy in the 18th century was the result of ravaging illnesses rather than a shortage of food. Oldervoll concludes that food supplies no longer should be reckoned as the sole cause of longer lives in the 19th century.⁴⁰

In the 18th century about 90% of all Norwegians lived in rural area. A result of this situation was that the number of farming units equalled the number livelihoods ("levebrød").

³⁷ Haarstad, op. cit.: 51.

³⁸ Jan Oldervoll. "Kva hadde befolkningsveksten å seie for utvandringa?" Engen, ed., op. cit.: 20-37.

³⁹ Ibid.: 21.

⁴⁰ Ibid.: 22.

If you were unable to find such a farming unit, you could not support a family. The number of such units was relatively constant. It was a society in balance. The need for new livelihoods did not exceed the number of new farms and new land made available. A new situation occurred when life expectancy rose, and steadily more children grew up. Families still had four or five children, but now they experienced that more than one grown-up son would compete to take over the land of the fathers. What would the younger son do? At the same time the parents also saw longer lives, and the take-over might be postponed for years.

Oldervoll has tried to establish how many new livelihoods were needed. He has defined the term “livelihood” as a place of work which gives enough resources to support a family.⁴¹ In the agrarian society it was only the position of farmer or crofter which offered such a livelihood. In his calculation, 12,502 new livelihoods were needed in the country in the period 1841-45, and 25,567 for the next five years.⁴²

Society mainly sought to alleviate this situation by allowing farms to be split up, the problem was that the growing number of smaller farms could not keep pace with the growing number of people dependent upon the same land. A second solution was then tried as a transition from agriculture to livestock was encouraged. In short, one tried to find ways to intensify the use of the land. Oldervoll maintains that this was not enough, and that people had to turn to other resources than the soil to find a livelihood: crafts, forestry, and fisheries.⁴³

At the middle of the 19th century the old society was on the edge of a breakdown. Unless something fundamental was done, it was likely that the country would face a period with rising problems in food supply, even starvation and a declining life expectancy. This did not happen, and one reason was that people looked further to find a way out. In America, land was almost free, and in a broad sense, many found a new alternative in going overseas.

In the initial phase of emigration, up to 1865, Oldervoll estimates that migrations covered about 40% of the need for new livelihoods. In a sum, emigration was a safety-valve in a dire situation, and was assisted by a growing industry in supplying work and hope for the

⁴¹ Ibid.: 24.

⁴² Ibid.: 35.

⁴³ Ibid.: 29.

future. Around 1850 there were only 12,000 industrial workers in the country, at the turn of the century the number was 80,000.⁴⁴

The early Norwegian emigration was in most respects dominated by families. Ingrid Semmingsen⁴⁵ gives an example from statistical surveys in the 1850s: there were more children per 100 emigrants than per 100 of those who remained in Norway. She goes on to state that children under the age of 12 make up 32% of the total number of emigrants in the mentioned period. Of the 3,940 emigrants who were registered in the years 1836-43, 36.8% were children.⁴⁶

In addition to bearing the mark of a typical family exodus, there is also the mark of a group-migration. By consequence, a fair number of small communities were uprooted and transported to another continent. They wanted to replant their society, and govern themselves without the interference of zealous civil servants. In the new land they would be able to choose for themselves. The result was often compact Norwegian settlements who for good reasons wanted to preserve closeness and maybe dependence upon countrymen and relatives; a strong sense of solidarity was surely a good support - both on the voyage and during the first period in the new country.

The first Norwegian emigrants left Stavanger on the sloop *Restauration* in 1825. The group consisted mainly of farmers from Rogaland, with ties to the Quakers and to the followers of Hans Nielsen Hauge. It should be noted that among later emigrants, however, religion was not one of the main causes for emigration.⁴⁷

After a three-month-voyage they reached New York to settle in a country where land could easily become theirs, and where they were guaranteed religious freedom. In the footsteps of Cleng Peerson, the 52 pioneers made their way to a location west of Rochester which was to be known as the *Kendall settlement*. In 1833 they moved on to Fox River, and one year later the new settlement was founded.

In 1865 the American Civil War finally came to an end. A prolonged period of bloodshed was over, and there came a time for re-building and reconciliation. The year 1865 is also a watershed in the history of immigration. From then and up to the First World War, waves of

⁴⁴ Ibid.: 31.

⁴⁵ Ingrid Semmingsen, *Veien mot vest* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1950): 493.

⁴⁶ Svaalestuen, op. cit.: 81.

⁴⁷ Svaalestuen, op. cit.: 59.

immigrants hit the American shores; the crests of Norwegians occur in 1869, 1882 and 1903. In the period after the war and up to the economic crisis in the 30s, there is another peak. America was a magnet: peace initiated a strong economic expansion, the economy was insatiable in its hunger for new manpower, farmers and seamen, miners and carpenters, dockworkers and traders. They were all potential builders of the nation.

The emigration to America is by many historians regarded as the largest migration in human history. In the period 1821-1930 about 33 million people moved from Europe to America. In addition there was also a considerable movement to other countries, especially Canada, South-America, and Australia. In sum, the European emigration amounts to around 55 million people.

In Scandinavia, Norway was the first country to experience a large-scale emigration. Sweden followed in the 1860s, Finland as late as the 1890s. Denmark never reached the same level of emigration.⁴⁸ When emigration culminated, Norway saw a yearly exodus of nearly 10 per 1000 inhabitants. For Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland respectively, the figures are 4, 7, 6, and 9. In absolute numbers, this means that Norway experienced a total emigration of around 800,000 people, whereas Sweden had 1.2 million, and Denmark 400,000.⁴⁹

In many ways, emigration to America was part of a larger movement which comprised both emigration from Norway and migration within the borders of the native country. In a broad analysis this mobility was closely linked to the profound upheavals in the old society, and the changes in the means and ways of production, called industrialization.

⁴⁸ Ingrid Semmingsen suggests that the high numbers of Norwegian emigrants compared to other Scandinavian countries follows the fact that Norwegian emigration started early. In that way close connections were founded from the 1830s, and helped establish a tradition for emigration. Later waves of emigrants built upon this tradition, and some historians would call this "a self-generating or self-increased effect". Semmingsen. "Amerikaferd": 12-14.

⁴⁹ Hans Norman and Harald Runblom. *Nordisk Emigrasjonsatlas: Texter och kommentarer* (Gävle: Cikada, 1980): 7.

**CHAPTER V:
MAIN FEATURES OF NEDENES
COUNTY, 1800 - 1850**

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Nedenes County was in the Middle Ages part of *Egðafylki* or *Agðir*. *Agðir* was originally the southern coastline, and was divided into *Aust-Agðir*, presentday *Aust-Agder County*, and *Vestr-Agðir*, in our time to become *Vest-Agder County*.

5.2 ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION

The administrative organization of Nedenes County around 1800 carried on the bifurcation of the district into “Nedenes Fogderi” and “Robyggelaget Fogderi”. The former comprised the coastal communities in what is now known as *Aust-Agder County*, from Gjerstad and Søndeled in the east, to Birkenes and Høvåg in the west. In the period 1801-1852 the number of parishes was 16. The latter, on the other hand, comprised the typical inland parishes to the north.

In the Grimstad area, it has often been customary to put the parishes of Eide and Fjære among the coastal communities, whereas Landvik Parish has been regarded as an inland community. This may be doubtful, since Landvik Parish has access to the sea, and shipping activities played an important role in the economy. Throughout the period, the inland communities were biggest as regards area, while the coastal communities were the biggest in population.¹

5.3 DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT

The demographic development of the county is mirrored in the census returns from the period 1801-1865. The first and the last of these returns are the most reliable. In addition, the returns of 1845 and 1855 are relatively good, since the counters had clear instructions and were equipped with a list of all farms in the district. The least reliable return is that of 1815; instructions and mandate were then less detailed and even incorrect.²

The population in Nedenes Fogderi in 1801 was 22.536, and the area was 2027.15 km². This gives a population density of 11.12 persons per km².³ In his book, *Population and Society in Southern Norway 1735-1865*, Michael Drake divided the parishes in Southern

¹ Amund Helland. *Topografisk-Statistisk Beskrivelse over Nedenes Amt (Første Del)* (Kristiania: Aschehoug, 1904): 722, 2-21.

² Helge Ove Tveiten, op. cit.: 13.

³ Helland, op. cit.: 3.

Norway into five categories according to their population density.⁴ In his model, only 5.1% of those parishes in question in 1801, had between 10 to 15 persons per km². They represented 13.7% of the population. The Fogderi on average falls into this category. Some of the parishes in the region even fell into Drake's highest category: more than 20 persons per km². Fjære Parish was one of those with 23.68 persons per km². Of the 20 parishes in Southern Norway with more than 20 persons per km², four were found in Nedenes Fogderi.

The coastal communities in the Fogderi only covered 561 km². The population in 1801 was approximately 11,400. The population density would there be 23.33 persons per km², while the inland communities had an area of 1466 km², and a population of ca. 10,670. In other words, the coastal communities were three times as densely populated compared to the inland communities. In comparison, population in Robyggelaget Fogderi in 1801 was only 1.31 persons per km².

The ratio between coastal and inland districts changed only slightly up to 1845, when the corresponding numbers were 31.55 and 10.64. Population increased, but the ratio between the two parts remained relatively constant.

The population in Nedenes County was in 1801 recorded to be 31,823; it grew only slightly up to 1815, 32,404, and reached 38,270 in 1825. From 1801 to 1845, population in Norway increased by 50%; Nedenes county showed exactly the same percentage. In Drake's view, the main reason for this remarkable growth was the decrease in the mortality rate, coupled and explained by better and sufficient nourishment. The spread of the potato was important in the country as a whole, and also of course in Nedenes County.⁵

The growth of the population in the county was 241 from 1801 to 1815. In the next decade the increase was 6,020. Up to 1835 the growth was a little less, but up to 1845 there was a new jump: 4,695. Later, emigration to America was responsible for a slump in the development; according to Tveiten, ca. 2,400 persons emigrated from the district between 1845 and 1855.⁶

⁴ Michael Drake. *Population and Society in Southern Norway 1735 – 1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969): 8. Quoted by Tveiten, op. cit.: 14.

⁵ Drake, op. cit.: 63.

⁶ Tveiten, op. cit.: 16.

Table 5.1:
Demographic development in Nedenes County, 1801-1865.⁷

	1801	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
N.F.	22,536	22,526	28,303	29,543	33,859	37,370	43,907
R.F.	9,287	9,978	10,967	12,745	13,871	14,207	14,557
N.A.	31,823	32,404	38,270	42,288	47,730	51,577	58,464

N.F. = "Nedenes Fogderi"

R.F. = "Robbyggelaget Fogderi"

N.A. = "Nedenes Amt"/Nedenes County

Narrowing the attention to the three parishes surrounding the expanding town of Grimstad, the situation developed as follows:

Table 5.2:
Demographic development in selected parishes in Nedenes Fogderi, 1801-1865.⁸

Parish	1801	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
Fjære	1,327	1,352	1,654	1,890	2,325	2,806	4,108
Landvik	1,237	1,226	1,518	1,690	1,890	2,027	2,230
Eide	530	495	629	640	652	693	736
N.F.	22,536	22,526	28,303	29,543	33,859	37,370	43,907

N.F. = "Nedenes Fogderi"

In these parishes, the status quo, or even decrease in population between 1801 and 1815, was followed by strong growth in the period 1825 to 1865: for Fjære, Landvik and Eide respectively, the increase in % got as high as 148.4%, 46.9% and 17.0%.

There was a different pattern in the two regions in the county as regards the growth of the population. Nedenes Fogderi had a near stand-still in the period 1801-1815, while Robbyggelaget Fogderi saw an increase of 591 persons, or 6.4%. One should not draw drastic conclusions on the basis of such small numbers, and in addition there is the inaccuracy of the 1815 Census Returns. It is, however, likely that the period of hunger and misery in the years from 1808 to 1814 did not affect the inner and upper parishes to the same extent as the coastal ones.

The population in Nedenes Fogderi showed a relatively even increase after 1815, with peak years from 1815 to 1825, and from 1844 to 1865. The growth of the population was on

⁷ Census Returns, 1801-1865, printed statistics. Statsarkivet i Kristiansand/ State archives.

⁸ Ibid.

the whole considerable from 1835 to 1865: in those thirty years 14.364 persons were added, or a 48.6% increase.

In Robyggelaget Fogderi the situation was quite different. The peak period here was 1825 to 1835, with a growth of 16.2%. But in the previous period (1815-1825), the figure was only 11.0%, compared to 34.6% in Nedenes Fogderi.

Most remarkable was, however, the slight growth after 1835, and in particular from 1845 to 1855, and from 1855 to 1865, with 2.4% and 2.5% respectively.

Emigration to America may explain in some measure the low growth of the population in Robyggelaget Fogderi from 1845 to 1855, but this is hardly a convincing explanation for the next decade. In this latter period only a small number of people were reported to have emigrated, and it seems likely that we must look to the considerable internal migration from the inland parishes towards the coast to find a more likely reason.

Based on the earlier mentioned division in inland and coastal communities, there were in 1801 ca. 10,670 inhabitants in the inland districts, compared to ca. 11,400 along the coast. Up to 1845 this situation changed little. But from 1845 to 1855 there was hardly any growth in the population inland, but the growth on the coast was 2,900 persons. The next decade showed the same development, the coastal districts added another 6,000 people, the inland districts only about 2,380.

In a broader perspective the demographic development after 1845 shows that the small towns along the coast played the role of magnets for the population inland. In 1855 the population in the coastal parishes and the towns represented 66.2% of the population in the county; in 1920 the figure had grown to 70%.⁹

Grimstad is a good example of an unstable population: people left the town, but at the same time equal numbers of people moved in. In 1855, 47.4% of the townspeople were born in Grimstad. In inland parishes like Åmli and Valle, the figures were 85% and 97%.¹⁰

⁹ Bjørn Slettan, *Agders historie, 1820-1920* (Kristiansand: Agder Historielag, 1998): 25.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*: 27.

5.4 DETACHED VIEWS?

Not many visitors and observers have recorded their impressions of Nedenes County as early as 1800. In 1842, however, author Henrik Wergeland was working on his book on the rebel Kristian Lofthus. Probably using impressions from this own childhood in the region, he wrote:

This county ... despite its southernly location, is extremely ill suited for agriculture. Norway has no more barren and sparsely populated region than the mass of mountains, heaths and valleys running in all directions, constituting Robyggelaget Fogderi; and in the other Fogderi in the county, the coastal stretch of Nedenes, farming, though blessed with more lenient conditions, was no better off. Closer to the coast, everybody wanted to belong to the sea, and get their income from it. In both districts farms were very much split up; in the east particularly, among people who were only crofters, whose time and strength are spent on drudgery for the ironworks.¹¹

A similar negative view is found in Jens Kraft's account from touring Norway between 1820 and 1830. Coming to Nedenes County, he wrote:

No other places in the country are so neglected as this county, but at the same time no other place sees the combination of so many different industries and activities. The consequence is that farming, which requires most diligence, is also most neglected.

In contrast to the dismal status of agriculture, Kraft is more positive when it comes to mining:

The mountains in Nedenes Fogderi do not distinguish themselves through their height or imposing stature, but through their wealth of iron ore, making the district between Arendal and the eastern parishes, the most important iron ore fields in the country.¹²

The southern coastline had “always” been open to the world. As early as the 16th century, ships from the region had woven their routes across the seas to the north of Europe, thus establishing valuable trade with countries like Germany, England, Denmark, and Holland. Seafaring was a most ordinary activity, and of course, brought impulses and ideas

¹¹ Henrik Wergeland. *Almuesmanden Christian Jensen Lofthus* (1842). Reprint of original. (Oslo: Juni Forlag, 1997): 158. My translation.

¹² Jens Kraft. *Topografisk-statistisk Beskrivelse over Kongeriget Norge, I-VI, Det Søndenfjeldske Norge, III* (Christiania, 1920-35). My translation. Quoted by Tveiten, op. cit.: 57.

from a rapidly changing Europe, but suffered in periods from downturns in international business cycles.

It has often been maintained that the two southernmost counties were democratic and even radical. An echo of this assertion may be seen in William Warren Vernon's observations from a journey through Nedenes County. Vernon found the region a "thoroughly democratic county", and "intensely radical".¹³

5.5 THE FIVE-YEAR-REPORTS

From the last part of the 1820s we have a satisfactory view of the economical situation in the county, particularly in the relation of agriculture to other industries. In 1829 the Ministry of Interior Affairs ("Departementet for det Indre"), ordered the County Governors to supply a report of the status of their respective counties. The County Governors passed the questions on to the sheriffs and others who were well acquainted with the situation in the local communities. Details in these reports may sometimes be inaccurate, but in general the tendency is mostly correct.

In 1835 the reports were made a regular feature every five years, hence the name "five-year-reports". The collection of data was in 1876 taken over by the Bureau of Vital Statistics.¹⁴

In the early periods, the County Governors were often overtly pessimistic about the future of the county. In reality, their predictions often proved to be too timid about positive prospects and tendencies. Reviewing their general views from 1835 onwards, a starting point might be Mr. Schauboe's report:

*Progress will be slow, partly because the general public unwillingly leave the old ways, partly because other industries with less toil supply the necessary sustenance, particularly in the vicinity of roads and where agriculture is joined with lumbering, as the forests give the owner, with the assistance of crofters and dayworkers, a sufficient income.*¹⁵

¹³ William Warren Vernon. *Recollections from Seventy-two Years* (London, 1917); quoted by Slettan, op. cit.: 49.

¹⁴ "Beretning om Kongeriget Norges økonomiske Tilstand"; reports used in this connection are those of 1836-1840 (Christiania, 1843), 1841-1845 (Christiania, 1847), 1846-1850 (Christiania, 1853). Aust-Agder Arkivet/ County Archives, Arendal. My translations.

¹⁵ *Five-year-reports, 1835-40.*

This is only a possible first complaint among many to follow that attention was drawn away from agriculture, and the culprit was often the growing shipping and shipbuilding activities, here termed “other industries”.

Considering the whole period from 1836 to 1850, Mr. Schauboe’s successor, Mr. Harboe, saw things this way:

Cultivation of new land has not been of any great importance. Everything is done in the old way. Methods in farming are primitive, there are too few new tools put to use. (1836-40)

Farming has probably been making some progress in this period, but this is not the result of a marked increase in acreage. ...Even in fortunate years, the district is not able to provide food for its population. ... There is a bettering of the economic situation in the district. This comes as a consequence of increased activities in all industries, combined with brighter prospects in shipping and favourable trade conditions. ... In the last years emigration to America has begun, and is still taking place. ... The reasons for emigration seem to be taxes and levies, and the hope of finding a better way to sustain a family. Emigration will decrease or be terminated once people get reliable information about the conditions in America. (1841-45)

In the greater part of Robyggelaget Fogderi, as well as in certain parts of Nedenes Fogderi, farming is at the same level as in most recent reports. Methods and farming tools are the same as in the old days. In the coastal districts, however, farmers realize more and more the benefits of getting improved tools and equipment, and the necessity of cultivating the soil with reflection and intelligence. ... In the last five years emigration to America from the rural districts has been as follows:¹⁶ (1846-50)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number, emigrants</i>
1846	226
1847	33
1848	58
1849	240
1850	343
Sum	900

¹⁶ Table is not included in original material.

One might argue that in the “five-year-reports” the attitudes of the County Governors towards the common man shine through. People were supposed to till the soil, and do little else. Other activities and industries might topple the balance in society, and stability was the cornerstone of any bureaucratic scheme. The fysiocratic mentality was clear: farming was the backbone in any national economy. That might be the reason for the Governors’ constant complaint that shipping, shipbuilding, seafaring and lumbertrade diverted people’s attention from what they ideally should be doing, namely farming. As was shown above, Governor Harboe linked the slow development of farming in the 1840s and 50s to the flourishing of shipping and shipbuilding.

5.6 POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Constitution of 1814 had established a “broad”, but not universal right to vote. Crofters, servants, workers and women were excluded from the vote, and not until 1880 did the volume of participation reach a level which may be termed representative. Few people used their right to vote, and in fact a limited group of influential people decided on the set-up of political organs. The authorities seemed satisfied with this situation; “irresponsible elements” must be kept at bay. Generally, election campaigns and agitation were regarded as nuisances.

In the 1840s elections were organized through electoral colleges. There were, in other words, no direct elections, but rather a general view that the common man could not be trusted in political affairs, and whims, moods, and popular trends must not affect the elections.

Nedenes County was a region with relatively many landowners in the countryside and in the towns. That is, a good number of people had political rights. Not many of those supported the idea of extending the right to vote, which in the 1850s was advocated by e.g. Søren Jaabæk and Marcus Thrane. Jaabæk was elected to the Storting in 1845, but it took him years to gather support for his belief in democratic and free elections. Although his origins were in the western part of the country, he became popular and respected in Nedenes County, not least because of his insistence on frugality in all economic affairs.

2,059 voters were qualified to vote in the 1841 elections, i.e. they were registered in the electoral register. 1,077 used their right to vote, a meagre 52%. The participation in Nedenes County was thus slightly over the national average.

In 1841 Nedenes County sent five representatives to the National Assembly; three from rural areas, and one from Grimstad/ Arendal and Risør respectively. It is an interesting feature that the representatives from the rural districts had four times as many voters behind them compared to the three little towns. The development from 1841 to 1844 showed that the two ministers and one bailiff elected from the rural districts were largely replaced by farmers. They all met as individual politicians, as there were no political parties.¹⁷

The County Councils met for the first time in 1838. The leading men of the parishes thereby took over the responsibilities of the civil servants who had been appointed by the Crown, and had been totally dominant in the counties. This new body of able men was entitled to comment on government proposals, and to put it bluntly, strived to solve problems that were too big for the municipalities, and too complex for a badly developed state apparatus. In terms of everyday life, they came to concentrate on matters within healthcare, education, communications and law. In all these matters they represented a wish to control the local authorities, i.e. to cut down on expenses.

The structure of local government was reorganized with the introduction of the so-called *Formannskapslovene* in 1837-38. The responsibilities of the local councils in the parishes were widened through these laws, and would in many instances take over work done by the Church. However, interest in local elections remained low, but a national trend was repeated also here: there was a marked shift in power and influence from civil servants to farmers.

The political situation in the county in 1838 showed that ten out of 18 “ordførere”/ *mayors/chairmen* were farmers; the rest were ministers. All of these met in the county council, where they did their best to keep the towns outside their affairs. In this way the growing towns on the coast remained for some time little islands with hardly any cooperation from the county council in financial matters.

Frugal ideals were basic in all the smaller municipalities and parishes, the economy was kept tight and sober, and budget matters were sometimes planned rather at random.¹⁸

¹⁷ Slettan, op.cit.: 255.

¹⁸ Ibid.: 262.

The farmers were often right in complaining that they carried the financial burdens. Taxes were imposed on the basis of the value of the farms in the parish (“matrikkelskyld”), and money was sparsely distributed by the local councils to good causes like poor relief, roads, schools, church matters, and cemeteries.

In the main, municipal responsibilities and activities were extended after 1840, but as late as 1850 large groups of people were still without influence or interest in political affairs.

5.7 POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS, AND IDEALISTIC CHALLENGES

During the reigns of kings Fredrik IV, Kristian VI, and Fredrik V, several important decisions were taken regarding regulation of the trade between Denmark and Norway on local smaller ships. Some of these decisions came as a direct result of a continuous trade-conflict between the citizens of Arendal and the common people outside the towns. The common people had enjoyed their trade privileges going back to 1574, sending their lumber across the Skagerak, and bringing home grain and foodstuff. In 1723 the harmony ended when the citizens of the towns began defending their newly established rights of trade. This conflict was continued well into the 19th century.¹⁹

Formally, decisions were taken in Copenhagen, but in reality they only reflected what the official representatives locally in Norway wanted. Studies suggest that the “stiftsamtmand”, the regional governor in Norway acquired a more independent position in relation to central authorities and could influence to a larger extent the formation of economic policies and legislation in their region than their Danish counterparts were able to do.²⁰

The regulations did not, however, entail that trade was monopolized by the citizens in the towns. The old privileges were in many respects intact, as the out-of-town public still carried on their small cargo trade with lumber and grain across the Skagerrak. A little armada, consisting mainly of sloops, brought timber southwards, and took onboard butter, grain, and even pigs in their return. Also, the trade conducted while the ships were in harbour went on, though there were attempts to reduce the number of days allowed for this activity.

¹⁹ Gustav Sætra. “Skutehandelen i Nedenes” Kalle Bäck, ed. *Skog och Brännvin*, (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1984): 304-344.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, ”conclusion”: 383.

It is obvious that the extent of this trade must have taken away part of the basis for agricultural production and development. People were simply better off selling timber and buying farm products compared to producing the goods themselves. Consequently, when the trade came to an end around 1850, agricultural production increased out of necessity.

Table 5.3:
*Number of vessels crossing the Skagerrak in 1844.*²¹

Harbour	Year	Norwegian	Danish	Sum
Grimstad	1844	63	31	94

It was the citizens who took the first step to try to abolish the privileges in order to concentrate trade in the towns. Of course, the people in the rural districts fought back, passively by ignoring new regulations, and actively by writing petitions, complaining to the King, and by outright rebellious actions. The great majority of these regulations gave priority to other needs than those of the peasants. For this reason it is assumed that the peasants in their local communities raised demands for a freer economy.

Small-scale rebellions occurred in 1688, 1725, 1737, 1750, and 1752. There is a continuity in these actions: many families are repeatedly involved, and there is also a direct line to the Lofthus uprising near the end of the century.

Many of the leaders and participants in the actions were arrested and sentenced to terms in prison, but on the whole punishment was mild.

Concentrating on the Grimstad-district, the following persons were involved:

- Complaint to the Regional Governor in Kristiansand, 1737:

From Fjære Parish: Johan Samuelsen Lia, Niels Tjøstelsen Kroken, Halvor Ditlefsen Tøra, Anders Samuelsen Lia, Hans Kristiansen Klepp, Hans Pedersen Konnestad, Kristoffer Klemmetsen, Siver Pedersen (all of them land owners).

From Landvik Parish: Gjeruld Nielsen Tjore, Tore Jonsen Morholt, Aslak Jansen Åkre, Niels Nielsen Tjore, Gunnar Ånonsen Tjore, Lars Andersen Inntjore, Niels Olsen Inntjore, Gunnar Gundersen Vatnestrånd (all of them land owners). Kristen Kristensen Tjore were among those who delivered the complaint in Kristiansand.

²¹ Gøthe Gøthesen, *Norskekystens fraktmenn* (Oslo: Grøndahl, 1980), quoted by Andreas Vevstad, *Aust-Agder Landbruksselskap gjennom 150 år* (Kristiansand: Aust-Agder Landbruksselskap, 1981): 24.

- Complaint to the King in Copenhagen, 1750:

From Fjære Parish: Kristen Gregersen Bie, Ole Jensen Stoltenberg. Kristen Gregersen Bie was later sentenced to prison by the Stoud-commission, but like many others he had fled the country on a ship in the merchant fleet.

From Eide Parish: Niels Henriksen Omre, Knut Andersen Knardalen.²²

Traditionally, historians have seen the period from 1720 to 1784 as a period when the absolute monarchy strove for uniformity and centralization in the affairs of the united country. Administratively, this was expressed through decisions taken centrally in Copenhagen, and economically through trade being concentrated with the citizens in the towns. Gustav Sætra disagrees: trade was not concentrated, and there was certainly a lack of uniformity in the continuous trade across the Skagerrak. It seems that opinions and actions taken by the local representatives, particularly by the regional governor, were more important, and that the authorities in the capital mostly followed the local viewpoints.²³

Despite the fact that the same rules and regulations were in force in both Norway and Denmark, the Norwegian peasants deviated from the peasants in Denmark in many respects. Ownership of land was more prevalent in Norway, and even on the increase in the 18th and 19th centuries. Even the status of the crofters was different. They were not dependent upon the landowners to the same extent as in Denmark. The greater independence of the Norwegian farmers and crofters and lesser dependency on other stronger groups may well explain a good deal of the relatively high political activity among Norwegian peasants, though it would take some time before they had a political platform.

As mentioned earlier, many observers have often found a democratic disposition in the southern regions. Some would even call it a radical tradition in rural areas. Whether these trends were imported via the wide contacts with the outside world, or were born and nurtured by internal situations, is unclear. What is certain, however, is that new and challenging ideas and views came to the surface from the middle 18th century, and found fertile soil in Nedenes County.

These were ideas that were born out of despair and commitment, out of protest and dissatisfaction, and those brought about popular uprisings, and even came close to class

²² Sætra: 337-338.

²³ Ibid.: 336, 338.

struggle. In any case, three men became central in challenging rooted traditions and attitudes, undermining the hereditary and customary political powers, and thereby paving the way for later democratic developments.

They were Kristian Lofthus, Hans Nilsen Hauge and Marcus Thrane. In a local perspective, they were important in inspiring and reinforcing a tradition of scepticism, and by voicing a proud insistence on individual rights in the face of a state apparatus.

5.8 KRISTIAN LOFTHUS (1750 – 1797)²⁴

In his book on Lofthus, Kristen Stalleland wrote:

*Kristian Lofthus did not want to be, and was not a rebel. The movement he led was a peaceful reform movement which was sorely needed in its time. And the measures he used were not more than was necessary, if he were to succeed in conveying his meanings.*²⁵

Kristen Stalleland was, in other words, sympathetic towards Lofthus and his mission. He represented a common feeling that Lofthus had been unfairly treated by the authorities, and had received a harsh punishment which was out of proportion to his actions.

A citizen of Landvik Parish, Stalleland in his book on Lofthus brings together central persons from in a meeting with Lofthus himself in Herefoss Parish. There is no documentation that this meeting really took place, but the opinions and sentiments are of a convincing nature.

The core of the conversation reported is the usual complaint about the civil servants and their abuse of authority and power. Torjus Knutsen Åmlid, Knut Stoveland, Åsmund Rodalen, Hallvor Gauslå and Per Iglund speak with the same voice: they give numerous examples of civil servants who exploit farmers for their own economic gain.

²⁴ Kristian Lofthus was a farmer in Vestre Moland near Lillesand, and married to Else Sofie Madsen from Eide. He was a pioneer within agriculture in his district, and was even awarded prizes for his work. Besides running his farm, he was also involved in activities related to seafaring and forestry (saw-mills). Undoubtedly a stubborn and uncompromising man, he easily ended up in conflicts. In 1786 he went to see the King in Copenhagen, on behalf of his fellow farmer partisans, to complain about the unfair and illegal actions of the citizens of Arendal and the bailiffs of Nedenes County. He regarded himself a patriot, and tried to rouse the public, also in neighbouring Telemark. The authorities issued an arrest order for him, but this led in its turn to renewed agitation. A commission was established to investigate the complaints. The farmers received support, and a few bailiffs were sacked, but at the same time Lofthus was branded an insurgent who must be done away with. In 1787 he was arrested and brought to *Akershus* fortress. His followers tried to fight for his release, but could not equal the military forces sent against them. A commission sentenced Lofthus to imprisonment in irons for life; 13 of his adherents received milder sentences. Kristian Lofthus died in prison in 1797. In Norwegian history he has gained a place as a freedom fighter, and a forerunner for the liberation from Denmark in 1814. His actions were, however, directed against the abuses committed by civil servants, and did not aim at dissolving the union with Denmark.

²⁵ Kristen Stalleland. *Kristian Lofthus – Det han vilde og gjorde* (Bergen: Lunde, 1935): 181. My translation.

The sheriffs are often their target: they make a huge profit on dishonest practices in writing out documents and generally dragging their feet in official business. The bad boy seems to be Ånon Salvesen, the Sheriff in Øyestad, Froland and Fjære.

In his turn, Per Igland tells the story of a clerk who used 32 pages with large letters to copy a document; and charged per sheet of paper. Says Igland: "Those civil servants should have been sacked a long time ago".²⁶ The matter had cost him the worth of four cows, he claimed.

Faced with a lot of irritation and frustration, Lofthus urges his companions to be reasonable and prudent; one should be angry with the civil servants, but the wise thing is to put one's trust in the king in Copenhagen. The "father" will surely understand and react against the unseemly burdens the state has placed on the farmers: corrupt civil servants, the monopolized import of grains from Denmark, and the harsh regulations of lumbering and the establishment of sawmills.²⁷

Kristian Lofthus was undoubtedly the leader for the biggest peasants' revolt within the Danish-Norwegian state. The farmers felt that the citizens of Arendal exploited them, that the civil servants had committed several injustices against them, and that the restrictions and injunctions from the state were too oppressive. The civil servants, on the other hand, must admit that the situation was out of control: there were rumours that Lofthus threatened the town of Arendal with an army of 1,000 men, farmer leaders had been freed from arrest by their own men, and the farmers themselves had taken a bailiff into custody. In many ways it was a tense situation that brought about fear of a state of emergency and revolutionary sentiments. Appointed commissions and the military were left to pour oil on troubled waters.²⁸

²⁶ Stalleland, op. cit.: 25. My translation.

²⁷ The peasants of Landvik Parish were in many ways dependent upon the activities of the ironworks in Froland. The proprietor there, Hans Smith, played a double role as both owner and leading representative of the state. In a written complaint the good people of Landvik remark: ... *the ironworks at present times is in decline in the hands of a mean man, who has already shown examples of his toughness against the peasants, and also in the form of harsh contracts and obligations, and against the workers by cutting their wages and increasing their labour, in the manner of Pharaoh against the people of Israel in Egypt.* My translation. Georg Sverdrup. *Lofthusbevegelsen* (Kristiania: Grøndahl, 1917): 48. Quoted by Gustav Sætra. "Fra opprør til revolusjon" *Årbok* (Vest-Agder Fylkesmuseum, 1996).

²⁸ Much has been written about Kristian Lofthus. Some of the best documented versions are: Henrik Wergeland. *Almuesmanden Christian Jensen Lofthus* (1842), reprinted (Oslo, Juni forlag 1997); Georg Sverdrup. *Lofthusbevegelsen* (Oslo: Grøndahl, 1917); Halvdan Koht. *Bondereising* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1926). In a local perspective Gustav Sætra has published valuable insights, e.g. his major thesis *Embetsmann, Bonde, Borger* (University of Bergen, 1980).

Common people supported the Lofthus uprising. It was natural that the core of the movement was made up of farmers, but also teachers, crofters, day-workers and vagabonds participated. In addition, there was also some support from shipmasters and procurators. The civil servants in particular feared the day workers and the mountain farmers, the first because they might have nothing to lose, the second because of their reputation for fearless stubbornness and violence.²⁹

Traditionally, the sheriffs had often led the farmers in cases of complaint against the state bureaucracy. This is, however, only partly true in the Lofthus uprising. The sheriffs spoke out on behalf of the farmers in relation to the citizens of Arendal, but otherwise the roles were reversed, and the sheriffs were among those whom the farmers wanted prosecuted. In many cases the sheriffs were hated because they let themselves be used against their own people. Instead of sheriffs, leading farmers took the key positions, and many of them were related to each other and to Lofthus himself.³⁰

The uprising followed traditional ways. Farmers were gathered, they wrote and signed petitions, chose delegates to be sent to Copenhagen, and collected money for travel expenses. From Landvik, two men were chosen to travel: Steinar Aslaksen Østerhus and Anders Nilsen Gusdal. The people of Landvik had collected 32 “riksdaler” for travel money.³¹ Gustav Sætra argues that earlier uprisings in the area followed the same pattern, and that there is a continuity in the actions because of the repeated participation of certain persons and families.³²

In the end, the Lofthus-uprising turned out to be of a more serious character than earlier events. Both differences and legal actions were harsher. The state was challenged at a time of tense relations with Sweden and when revolutionary ideas were spreading in Europe, and it was not surprising that the authorities found it wisest to fight fire with fire.

The regime was not opposed to reforms, but the way they saw it, reforms must be initiated from and through the established society, not from beneath and the outside. Nonetheless, the reforms that followed in the wake of the Lofthus uprising were initiated and inspired by the actions of the common people. There is therefore hardly any contradiction

²⁹ Gustav Sætra. “Fra bondeledere til fanger” *Årsskrift 72* (Agder historielag): 92.

³⁰ *Ibid.*: 93. According to Sætra, Lofthus was related to half the population in Herefoss Parish. Also his marriage to Else Sofie from Eide Parish, broadened his network. His father-in-law, Anders Madsen, gave him his support.

³¹ *Ibid.*: 162.

³² Gustav Sætra. “Skutehandelen i Nedenes” *Skog och brännvin* : 303-304.

between the life imprisonment passed on by Mr. Fredrik Molkte, chairman of the commission, and the way he secured reforms for the public and gave them a devastating moral victory over the merchants and citizens of Arendal.

In May, 1789, Lofthus was given the writ of summons. In addition, 17 persons were brought before the court. Mainly, they came from the parishes of Øyestad and Herefoss. In more detail, these 17 leaders were residents of the following parishes: seven from Øyestad, two from Fjære, one from Froland, five from Herefoss, one from Vestre Moland, and one from Birkenes.³³

Most of them were farmers, but at the time of the trial, one was reported to be a dayworker, one was teaching, and one was a farmworker.³⁴

Gunnar Gundersen Rise and Torkel Johansen Steine from Øyestad, Aslak Svendsen Håbesland from Birkenes, and Ole Gregersen Sangereid from Vestre Moland were charged for being the leaders among the rebels, and were held responsible for partaking in Lofthus' actions. Omund Karlsen Furre, Ole Olsen Høida, and Omund Ånonsen Seldal from Øyestad, Halvor Jacobsen Tørvolt from Fjære, Vrål Tellefsen Hovatn from Froland, Ånon Pedersen Stie, Torjus Knutsen Åmli, Osmund Larsen Rodalen, and Knut Pedersen Stoveland from Herefoss were all accused of having used force against the Bailiff Dahl. In addition, Åsul Olsen Rise and Mikkil Bentsen Veding from Øyestad, Gjermund Jonsen Tøra from Fjære, and Halvor Kittelsen Gauslå from Herefoss were brought before the court on charges of threats against the same bailiff.³⁵

The prosecution was horrified at the implications of common men attacking and arresting a public servant. Only the intervention of the military had succeeded in freeing the bailiff. In other words, common men had dared to attack a state-appointed public servant who in his turn, was dependent upon authority and respect to carry out his duties. Punishment must therefore be a warning, and induce dread in those who were tempted to plan similar actions. The prosecution consequently held that nine of the accused should spend the rest of their lives in irons.

³³ The people put on trial demanded to have one of their own for defence; the choice fell upon Åsmund Reiersen, originally from Holt Parish, but who had moved to Landvik Parish for a while (his wife's home-parish). Øyvind Bjorvatn remarks that "the Lofthus movement stood strong in Landvik Parish." Øyvind Bjorvatn. "Hvem var Lofthus-vennen Åsmund Reiersen?" *Årsskrift* 73 (Agder historielag): 118, 119. My translation.

³⁴ Sætra. *Årsskrift* 72: 96.

³⁵ *Ibid.*: 96

In the end, the state turned out to be more lenient and willing to show mercy, thereby closing a problematic and burdensome trial that had lasted 14 years. At the opening of the process, 17 men had been charged. Two had been acquitted, another two died before the passing of sentences. One died before he was brought to serve his sentence. The remaining twelve were imprisoned at *Akershus festning* in 1800. They were released after six weeks and one day, having been mildly treated and even given good food.

For Kristian Lofthus, his life ended in prison.

Despite the efforts on the part of the state to calm and come to terms with the people in Nedenes County, memories of brutal treatment and unwillingness to implement reforms must have lingered, and even widened the already existing gap between the public and the state apparatus. There were simply too many instances of a narrow bureaucratic adherence to the letter of the law. An example is the case of farmer Knut Pedersen Stoveland from Herefoss Parish. The vicar in Landvik intervened on his part, begging the authorities for pardon. Stoveland was a poor man with seven children, a respected man with the best references from his fellow parishioners.

Both the County Governor and the Bishop in Kristiansand refused to listen to such arguments. They maintained that the decision from the High Court must be upheld, a deviation from the chosen course would have severe repercussions. Other, and higher, authorities were of the same opinion, and the plea for mercy was rejected.³⁶

The Lofthus affair also clearly shows a pattern of tightly woven bonds between the people of Nedenes Fogderi, particularly through family relations, but also in the form of easy and intermittent moves across the parish borders. Neighbouring parishes formed clusters, and people were wont to seek work in other places than their native valley, or for that matter find their spouse. It is perhaps a detail, but all the same interesting, that at the announcement of the trial being considered in the High Court (1794), both Osmund Karlsen Furre and Ånon Pedersen Stie resided in Landvik Parish, at Toskedal and Nedre Grøsle respectively.³⁷

The rioting farmers in Nedenes County were not fully appeased. In 1813 the final, uprising followed, before such riots were appeased and turned into responsible opposition

³⁶ *Ibid.*: 154.

³⁷ *Ibid.*: 175.

both in the Storting and the local councils. In the meantime, the Danish-Norwegian union had been demolished.

In June and July 1813, desperate and angry peasants from the districts surrounding Arendal marched into the town and demanded that the granaries be opened. Times were extremely difficult, and people were in many cases hovering on the edge of starvation. They were offered scraps, and scuffles in the streets followed. Military forces were gathered, and the uprising was struck down. In the ensuing trial, five of the leaders were sentenced to fairly short terms in prison.³⁸

5.9 HANS NIELSEN HAUGE (1771 – 1824)³⁹

In one respect, the budding fight for freedom in Norway started in the late 1700s, represented by Kristian Lofthus' peasant uprising and Hans Nielsen Hauge's strong influence towards spiritual liberation and awakening. In his work, Hans Nielsen Hauge managed to combine "the stock exchange and the cathedral". Besides preaching to the common man, he also established a network of followers who were engaged in trade and commerce. In a way he found a solution to Adam Smith's problem of combining the market and morality. For Hauge, making money was a blessing, a god-given task, but with the philanthropic aim of using profits for the good of other people. In Hauge's ideas there is certainly a parallel to Max Weber who in his essay "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" argues the importance of a sober life and the well-spent profit to better conditions for everybody. In Hauge's eyes, capital was a means to help others.⁴⁰

³⁸ Knut Mykland. "Bondeoppløp på Agder våren og sommeren 1813" *Årbok* (Vest-Agder Fylkesmuseum, 1996): 29-42.

³⁹ Hans Nielsen Hauge came from Østfold County, and early in his life showed a deep interest in religious thoughts and matters. In 1796 came his religious breakthrough: working in the fields, he received a calling from God, "a joy which goes beyond description". The next year he began travelling throughout the country. While preaching, he was arrested several times for violating the so-called "Konventikkelplakaten" from 1741, forbidding laymen to gather an assembly and preach without the permission of the bishop. From about 1800 he was involved in several industrial and economical activities. In 1804 the Government asked for reports regarding Hauge's work, and many described him as a fanatic, a dreamer who was spreading superstition and a false Christian faith among ordinary people, and who exploited religion for economic purposes. A new period in prison followed, but in 1809 he was temporarily released and allowed to travel south to e.g. Nedenes county to establish salt extraction industries in Lillesand.

Hauge was an orthodox Lutheran. He had no intention of breaking away from the church, and wished to remain a faithful member of that same church. Preaching that faith without action is dead, and by his pietistic insistence on a frugal and economic life, Hauge has been a dominating character in Norwegian lay movements.

Central works on Hauge are e.g.: Sverre Nordborg. *Hans Nielsen Hauge* (Oslo: Cappelen, 1966); Ingolf Kvammen. *Brev frå Hans Nielsen Hauge, I - IV/ Letters* (Oslo: Lutherstiftelsen, 1971-1976); Sigbjørn Ravnåsen. *Ånd og hånd* (Oslo: Luther Forlag, 2002); Dag Kullerud. *Hans Nielsen Hauge* (Oslo: Cappelen, 1996).

⁴⁰ Sigbjørn Ravnåsen. *Ånd og hånd*: 23.

In the tradition of the rural communities, the peasants were tied to their farms and the valley. Few people broke out of the rural setting to establish themselves in the towns. The religious liberation initiated by Hauge stimulated individuals to make up their own minds. Young farmers' sons left their native valley and founded new activities in the nearby towns or even in other places in the country. As such, Hauge's ideas and ideals may have been a contributing factor in the social re-organization of Norway.

In a local perspective, Hauge founded three industrial enterprises. Travelling through Kristiansand in 1798, he became interested in the only print works in the town. He persuaded Hans Thorsen Bacherud to buy the works, and in a short time it had become a flourishing activity. Six years later, on yet a travel through Kristiansand, a struggling brick works caught his eye, and Ole Eyelsen from Åmli was brought in to carry through another industrial success.

Imprisoned in the early years of the 1800s, Hauge volunteered from his cell for patriotic duty. Times were desperate, and there was an imminent need for salt to preserve fish and meat. With the English blockade on the coast in place, salt must be procured from the country itself. Hauge's idea was to boil salt-water, and thereby extract the necessary commodity. He was given permission to leave the prison, and went southwards along the coast to find the right spot to assist in sorting out a problem of national importance. In Lillesand he found the right location, and successfully established two boilers.

In a letter from Lillesand, dated April 9, 1809, he wrote:

I have now started building and laying bricks; it goes slowly to do all things necessary. However, we work with all our strength, and I, hardly a half man in heavy labour, am glad for any strength I might muster. It shall not last long before we start the boileries.

A week later he wrote:

*I have promised, and will probably keep my promise as long as the Government upholds its order, to comply with its command, when it does not hinder my doing good deeds, which I think it does not, such ones as I in freedom may carry out.*⁴¹

⁴¹ Kvammen, *Letters, II*: 20, 23. My translation; modernized.

5.10 MARCUS THRANE (1817 – 1890)⁴²

The Thrane-movement was the first major organized political movement in Norway. It lasted a short period, from 1848-1851, and mainly spread its views through its newspaper, agitation and travelling agents. At its peak, the movement probably comprised 400 societies and close to 30,000 members.⁴³

Shortly described, the long-term conditions that favoured the rise of the movement were well-known factors like the growth of the population, the internal migration from countryside to towns, a growing working-class in the towns, and a more peculiar phenomenon, the so-called “spirit of associations”. It seems that many people found the formation of “societies” a new and natural way of organizing themselves and promoting a variety of worthy causes.

In a short-term perspective, the most important reasons for the blooming of the movement were first and foremost Marcus Thrane himself and the revolution in France in February 1848. This event was the spark that ignited Thrane, and details of the uprising were soon known in Norway. Furthermore, an economic crisis hit the country in 1847, turning the good times of the early 1840s into recession and political unrest. In 1848-1849 there were problems in the export of timber, prices were low, and the shipping industry sailed in dire straits. Such problems gravely affected the industrial activities in Nedenes County.

In 1849 Marcus Thrane travelled south along the coast, and this journey accelerated the formation of local societies called “arbeiderforeninger” (workers’ unions). Thrane carried through his agitation, probably hoping to find fertile soil for his radical ideas in the

⁴² Marcus Thrane travelled widely in the late 1830s, among other places to France. He returned to Norway to take up teaching, and held several posts in the following years. In 1848 he became editor of *Drammens Adresse*, a newspaper which he turned into the most radical publication in the country. He lost this position, but had already founded the first workers’ society. The Thrane movement then grew with explosive force. Agitators were sent on the road, and by 1850 the movement reported to have 273 local societies with 20,850 members.

Artisans and workers in the towns joined with crofters in the countryside in a fight to introduce a general right to vote, to do away with customs protections, to better the conditions for poor workers, and to reform the public school system.

By 1850 a radical wing in the movement found that they could not conform to the laws of the country, and certain disturbances occurred in some places. Members were persecuted, and this, together with internal conflicts, broke the back of the movement. A year later the movement experienced a full crisis. Some leaders were arrested, and eventually convicted – in Marcus Thrane’s case he was sentenced to 4 years in prison. When he was released from prison in 1858, he worked for a while as photographer, but emigrated to America in 1863. The short-lived Thrane movement is not only the first Norwegian workers’ union, but also the first organized political mass movement. Marcus Thrane himself was a socialist agitator with high ideals. Many would place him among the most influential of all socialist leaders. Without knowing Karl Marx, he was close to the Marxist idea of class conflict.

Oddvar Bjørklund. *Marcus Thrane* (Oslo: Tiden, 1951).

⁴³ Hans Try. ”Thrane-rørsla på Agder” *Årbok* 43 (Vest-Agder Fylkesmuseum, 1996).

shipbuilding environments. Hans Try estimates the number of members in present-day Aust-Agder County of 750 to 1,000.⁴⁴ He also visited Grimstad, and a society was founded; the members counted 65 persons; the main groups were: 15 artisans, four master artisans, 22 carpenters, seven seamen, eight peasants, and nine day-workers. The peasants reportedly came from Landvik and Fjære Parishes.⁴⁵

Emigration historians have often argued the possibility of strong underlying elements of social unrest in the process that led to a decision to emigrate. Social unrest is in this connection an evasive quality, and discussions of the phenomenon have not always been founded on empirical material.

Helge Ove Tveiten has, in his thesis on emigration from Nedenes County, studied a wave of emigration which in time coincided with the rise and spread of the “Thrane movement”.⁴⁶ In my view he has successfully demonstrated that the element of social unrest, measured in the form of membership or signing of petitions to the authorities, was present in the process that led to emigration to America from Holt Parish in Nedenes County.⁴⁷

The number of followers of Marcus Thrane in Nedenes Fogderi was relatively modest. One must, however, bear in mind that the membership lists were written by the sheriffs, and that their sympathies might break in any direction. Nonetheless, the high number of emigrants from Holt Parish can at least partly be explained by the influence and political aftermath of the uprising: political persecutions, wide-spread disappointment, and possibly the example of Thrane himself, who emigrated to America.

The Thrane movement showed that conditions were favourable in Nedenes County for democratic ideas. It seems that many shared Thrane’s views on “the dreadful inequalities that now exist”, and this is yet again an example of the marked attitude of opposition in areas on the south coast to central authorities and bureaucracy, and to central government.

Kristian Lofthus, Hans Nielsen Hauge, and Marcus Thrane are therefore representatives of trends and movements that brought to the forefront scepticism and outright

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*: 47.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48, and Tveiten, *op. cit.*: 69.

⁴⁶ Tveiten, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷ Holt Parish was dominated by the iron-works, and dependent upon that enterprise. The aftermath of the crisis in the iron-works around 1848 may also be traced elsewhere than in Holt. Tveiten gives the example of a farmer from Landvik who was made bankrupt when he could not meet his obligations with the iron-works, and literally on the spot emigrated to America with his family. The peasants of Landvik were obliged to deliver charcoal to “Frolands Verk”. Tveiten, *op. cit.*: 121.

opposition to the idea of a centralized government, often embodied in a corps of state-loyal and foreign-educated civil servants. Rooted in the aspirations and problems of everyday life in a nation that was becoming “modern”, the three characters also lead the way for Søren Jaabæk, who around 1865 started his “farmers’ friends movement” (“bondevennsrørsla”), with the declared intent of getting peasants elected to the National Assembly, and throwing the civil servants out of office.

5.11 FARMING

About 1830 farming and forestry were dominant sources of income in Nedenes County. In coastal communities shipping and seafaring were important, and on the industrial side, factories in rural areas were very much linked with farming and forestry. The Census in 1828 shows that the population in the county had grown by 13.5% compared to 1815, that is on level with the national growth. The towns were still small, and as late as 1845 a little less than 16% of the population lived in towns.

In a general way, the County Governor’s report from 1828 stated that farming was in a relatively poor condition in the county:

*[Farming is] in a mediocre state, and the yield is far from sufficient to support the district. Lately, however, as the profits in shipping and forestry are slight, one shows farming increased attention, and it is therefore probably on the advance.*⁴⁸

A survey in 1835 (“Jordbrukstelingen”) established a ranking of the 5,006 farms in the county; 1,916 of those units (38%) were valued at less than a “skylddaler”, and 2,782 (56%) had a value of between one and two “skylddaler”. Only 6% of the farms were valued at more than two “skylddaler”.⁴⁹

Taxes and levies were by and by assessed on the basis of a farm’s “skyld”, i.e. value. In old times the value of a farm was set in terms of “huder” and “skinn”, i.e., hides and furs. Early in the 19th century there was a gradual transition to “skylddaler”, “ort” and “shilling” – which meant that the value was set in money. When the new land register (“matrikkel”) was worked out, there was yet a new term put to use: “1 mark = 100 øre”. Each farm was given a registration number (“gårdsnummer”), and a holding number (“bruksnummer”). The so-called “matrikkel” became a register of all farms in the county and country, excluding crofters’ land.

⁴⁸ My translation.

⁴⁹ Vevstad, op. cit.: 41-42.

On average, a farm in Nedenes County would comprise ca. 8 ½ acres of cultivated land, ca. 18 ½ acres of uncultivated land, and ca. 200 acres of forest land. The conclusion is that farms in Nedenes County were small, or at best, of medium size on a national scale.

Around 1840 a typical farm would be organized in clusters of houses built as notched log constructions. Cultivated land was often owned and worked in common. Strip farming was a hindrance to the introduction of machinery, and in addition the growing number of children led to a splitting-up of the land. The land reallocation under appointed justices in 1857 marked the beginning of a new era, and the end of strip farming and house clusters.⁵⁰

Traditionally, the farm was passed on to the eldest son, and younger siblings were forced to move out, and find their daily bread elsewhere. From 1769 it was made legal for parents to split the inheritance. But as the holdings grew more numerous and smaller, the possibility of sustaining a family on a limited acreage diminished; the consequence was a steadily growing mobility and internal migration, from the countryside towards the coastal towns.

From 1835, the census reports also contain information about livestock and sown grain. The figures in such surveys are generally considered to be too low, since the peasants feared that they by reporting true figures would suffer harder burdens of taxation. In addition, the status reports round 1835 have an added uncertainty because they use average figures of years past.⁵¹

*Table 5.4:
The County Governor's assessment of population, livestock and agricultural production, 1835.*

County	Pop.	Grains	Potatoes	Horses	Cattle	Sheep	Goats	Pigs
Nedenes	41,117	41,207	115,892	3,096	20,343	39,621	9,491	2,009

* *Grains/potatoes in "tønder"; 1 "tønne" = approx. 4 bushels. Figures: crop minus (sown) seed.*

A comparison of the reports from 1835 and 1845 shows the following result:

⁵⁰ Slettan, op. cit.:139.

⁵¹ Sverre Steen. *Det frie Norge, I-V. Det gamle samfunn* (Oslo: Cappelen, 1957): 25. Steen suggests that the peasants reported 10-20% below the real situation.

Table 5.5:
Increase in livestock/ agricultural production; 1845 compared to 1835 (%).

County	Grains	Potatoes	Horses	Cattle	Sheep	Goats	Pigs
Nedenes	+ 27%	+ 43%	+ 18%	+ 13%	+ 14%	+ 53%	+ 12%

(The growth in the number of horses was due to increased lumbering; the district had to import horses – every year “driftkarer” (horsemen) came from western districts with horses for sale.)

In his report in 1845, the County Governor stated that agriculture was in general improving. New tools had been taken into use, but the district was still unable to support itself. There was a status quo in gardening (fruits and vegetables), although the surrounding districts of Arendal were able to supply the town with wanted products.

According to the Governor, one of the main reasons for the lack of noticeable progress was the farming structure itself. Strip farming was still usual, blocking the use of new machinery, and as late as 1859, 48% of the farms in the county shared some sort of common land.

In many ways farming in Nedenes County reflected the progress of democratic ideals and practices. There were fewer crofters measured against farmers than the national average, 0.38 crofters per farmer in Nedenes, whereas the average was 0.53.⁵² Farming in the county was a joint responsibility shared by husband and wife. In fact, the growing importance of seafaring combined with farming led the County Governor to remark in his report in 1870:

“The small farms on the coast are mostly run by women, children and old people who have given up seafaring.”⁵³

In 1840 a farmworker would be paid ca. 22 shilling a day (= NOK 0.75); women were paid half this wage. A boy servant in Nedenes received ca. kr. 80 per year. Servants were usually given board and food, but the towns were temping because of higher wages.

In 1875 the boy servant was paid ca. kr. 240, a maid servant ca. kr. 78.⁵⁴ In 1897, at the height of mass-emigration, a one-way ticket across the Atlantic cost kr. 180. At that time, this was more than half a year’s wages for the boy servant.⁵⁵

On the whole, farming in Nedenes County was versatile. In addition to joint responsibilities, production itself was varied: grain (mostly barley), potatoes, some fruit and

⁵² Printed statistics, NOS, 1866.

⁵³ My translation.

⁵⁴ Printed statistics, NOS, 1875-1900.

⁵⁵ Odd S. Lovoll. *Det løfterike landet* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1983): 27.

vegetables, plus smaller domestic animals. The potato crops were gaining in importance⁵⁶ at the expense of grains. Cow barns were built, and livestock farming was generally on the advance. The lack in supply of fertilizers hampered increased production, though attempts were made at using seaweed as a replacement.

Although the noticeable and tangible results of agricultural progress were slight in the first part of the 19th century, a foundation for the changes that would occur in the next decades had been established. The changing structure opened the way for modern machinery. Around 1840 the threshing machines were introduced and a decade later the iron plough. Communications were steadily improved, and along with an increased emphasis on education and instruction.

Interest in the new ways had been roused, and the general level of public education was heightened. Professional guidance and advice was needed, and in 1854 the first two state agronomists were appointed, to be followed two years later by travelling county agronomists. Already in 1845 a travelling teacher in agriculture had toured the county, seldom welcomed by the peasants, but supported by civil servants, town citizens, and proprietors. There was perhaps an element of sound scepticism among the peasants, and the usual distrust in the establishment was certainly felt. In this way, the agrarian “upper-class” pushed ahead, while the farmers rather unwillingly followed.

The public measures in agricultural instruction came to be short-lived. In the 1840s the public effort to improve agriculture increased, but at the same time the interest for volunteer work in informing about new methods and tools, slumped. Idealistic associations saw a decrease in the number of members, and some had to suspend their activities well into the next century. Also the academies of agriculture met with resistance, and many were shut down, often on the pretext of savings. Before reopening in the 1890s, they were at times labelled “instruction to bankruptcy” by peasants who focused on a gap between theory and sound practise.

The growing population and rising prices led to increased activities in the forests of Nedenes County around the middle of the century. The rafting of timber was better organized,

⁵⁶ Per Assev tries in an article to assess the consequences of the potato dry rot, which appeared for the first time in Nedenes County in 1846. There is no doubt, he says, that this disease reduced potato crops in the district, and thereby probably boosted migration, but the problem never reached the catastrophic consequences seen in Ireland (“the potato famine”). Per Assev. “Litt om jordbruksbakgrunnen” *Utvandrerntal, Medlemsskrift* 30 (Selskapet for Grimstad Bys Vel, 1975): 10-14.

new rivers were cleared, and the conditions for the lumber trade were in general favourable. Was this heightened activity first and foremost an example of value-added industries in the district, a production which gave work and income, or was it simply ruthless exploitation of limited natural resources?

A recurring item in the “five-year-reports” is the complaint from the County Governor that “the forests are strongly reduced through mindless logging”. In 1855 he maintains that “it is an exception that a farm has a good forest”. In 1845 the complaint was no less clear: “Logging is often on the verge of clear-felling”.

Experts seemed to agree. Two commissions, in 1849 and 1859, warned against the exhaustion of the forests, and suggested a drastic reduction of the liberal rights of disposal, but local authorities were not willing to listen.

In Landvik, as elsewhere in the county, the attitude was clear: “The assembly thinks it will curtail the rights of the landowners”.⁵⁵ Likewise, in the Storting, the farmers would know nothing of government interference.

In retrospect, the heated debate over the keeping and the future of the forests in Nedenes County may seem somewhat exaggerated. What we see is a steadily increasing export of lumber, and forests which seem fully able to regenerate. There existed undoubtedly an ideal in those days to preserve and protect the valuable full-grown giants in the forests, and a corresponding reaction against the felling of mere saplings.

Better times in forestry would also affect agriculture. The export of timber to Great Britain, Holland, France, Denmark, and Belgium secured a steady flow of cash into the economy. As early as 1826, Jens Kraft remarked that “lumbering has from times immemorial constituted the main income for the people in [Nedenes County]”.⁵⁷ It was therefore natural that lumbering, combined with charcoal deliveries to the ironworks, diverted manual labour from agriculture.

The growing importance of forestry is also shown in the number of sawmills given in the “five-year-reports”. In 1850 the Fogderi had 74 privileged sawmills and 119 unprivileged ones. By 1855, the number had grown to 79 and 124 respectively.

People on the Skagerrak coast fished for own consumption, or a small-scale sale in their neighbourhood. Few, if any men, had fishing as their sole occupation; it is a striking

⁵⁵ Quoted by Slettan, *op. cit.*: 188. My translation.

⁵⁷ Kraft, *op. cit.* Quoted by Slettan, *op. cit.*: 182.

characteristic in Nedenes Fogderi that people were employed in several occupations, and it is often difficult to determine which was their main occupation. Farmwork, fishing and seafaring were often seasonal activities that made up the household economy.

The catching of lobster has a long tradition in the district. The County Governor states in 1850 that “lobsters are being shipped to England by English agents”. The lobsters were sent alive across the North Sea in bilge wells. It was an important activity, though not a main source of income; the annual export from Landvik and Fjære Parishes in 1850 was 12-15,000 items, according to the “five-year-report”.

In a sum, the agrarian districts in Nedenes County around 1850 were strongly egalitarian. There were relatively few crofters. The 1855 Census sets the ratio to 0.61 crofter to every farmer (the national average was 1.20). Every farmer had on average 0.66 servants, in Trøndelag the figure was 1.65. There were few farmers who owned large expanses of land, in fact the county had the smallest farms in the country, with least domestic animals and least acreage. As mentioned, there were many democratic features in the county, no large class of farm workers had developed, and class differences were in general small.

On the other hand, Nedenes County was in the forefront in the move towards a modern society. Though still hampered by old ways and methods in agriculture, people on the coast had discovered the advantages of modern equipment, and stood strong through their versatile combination of occupations. The second part of the 19th century saw a rapid expansion in shipping and shipbuilding, a growing importance of livestock farming, the introduction of a money economy to replace the traditional barter economy, and a declining number of people employed on farms. The 1865 Census reported that 36.4% of the population in Nedenes County was employed in farming, fishing, and lumbering. The figure nationwide was 51%. 21.4% of the population in the county was employed in mining and factories, at that time well above the national average.⁵⁸

Based on Tveiten’s study, it seems fair to conclude that the relative importance of agriculture in Nedenes Fogderi was on the decline in the period 1835-65.⁵⁹ In Robyggelaget Fogderi, however, the situation was quite different. Almost the entire population could be categorized in occupations closely connected to agriculture. In addition to landowning farmers and crofters, this district also had considerable numbers of people employed as day

⁵⁸ Slettan, *op. cit.*: 138.

⁵⁹ Tveiten, *op. cit.*

workers, servants, and artisans, occupations which were easily assimilated in the agrarian economy.

The relative strength of the monetary economy in Nedenes Fogderi is fundamentally different from the agrarian economy in Robyggelaget Fogderi. Monetary economy and exchange of goods stood firm in Nedenes Fogderi as early as 1835, and made considerable progress up to 1865.

It is uncertain what occupations in Nedenes Fogderi should be regarded as integral contributors in the system of self-sufficient farming. Svein Tveite remarks that the large group classified as servants were only paid in cash as early as the 1790s.⁶⁰ In this district we may not even put landowning farmers solely in the category of agrarian economy, because the industry of shipbuilding, according to the County Governor, was in the hands of farmers and seaside residents. Particularly in the coastal communities, where the bid for work was varied and industries differentiated, people tended to bend their interest for jobs according to the varying success and profits of the local industries. Svein Tveite says: “the farmers aimed at best possible living conditions, not really caring about the idea of self-supporting farms”.⁶¹

5.12 INDUSTRY

The industrial revolution had not reached Nedenes County in 1840. But times were changing, and the 1840s came to be a watershed in the development of a modern, industrialized society.

Nedenes Fogderi in particular was rich in minerals, especially iron ore. Mining and related activities were therefore important industries, first and foremost in the first half of the 19th century. The County Governor reports in 1829: “Of prime importance as regards mining, is Nedenes Fogderi, because of the abundance of iron ore to be found here”.⁶²

Jens Kraft also underlines the importance of mining:

*The mountains in Nedenes Fogderi do not distinguish themselves through their height or imposing stature, but through their wealth of iron ore, making the district between Arendal and some eastern communities, the most important iron ore fields in the country.*⁶³

⁶⁰ Quoted by Tveiten, op. cit.: 46.

⁶¹ Ibid. My translation.

⁶² County Governor’s “five-year-reports”. My translation.

⁶³ Kraft, part III. My translation.

The largest ironworks in Nedenes Fogderi was *Nes Verk*, owned by Jacob Aall. Wide forests were part of the estate, in 1860 estimated at 300,000 “mål”.⁶⁴

A summing-up of passages in the “five-year-reports” related to industrial growth, supplies a picture of steady and continuous development:

The following factories are running: 1 tannery, 14 grain mills, 1 ropewalk, 1 brickyard, 1 spikemill. Three ironworks are in operation: at Froland, Nes, and Egeland.

(1836 – 1840)

There are three ironworks running in the district. There is no essential change in the mining activities; the prices are better, and there is a certain amount of export of iron rods to North America. The following factories are in operation: 14 grain mills, 4 tanneries, 1 bone mill, 2 ropewalks, 4 tobacco factories, 73 privileged sawmills.

(1841 – 1845)

There are three ironworks running well: at Froland, Nes, and Egeland.⁶⁵ The following factories are in operation: 3 tanneries, 14 grain mills, 1 bone mill, 2 ropewalks, 74 privileged sawmills, 119 unprivileged sawmills, 2 brick ovens, 2 tobacco factories, 1 iron foundry, 1 metal foundry.

(1846 – 1850)⁶⁶

Apart from the ironworks, industrial activities in Nedenes County in the 1840s were largely small-scale. By 1845, “industrial workers” did not exist as a group in the county, and at the end of the decade, hindrances for industrial growth were still all too-common: limited capital, high wages, lack of technical schools, and thereby lack of competent workers. However, there was one exception to this general picture: shipping and related activities experienced a major boom from about 1850.

5.13 SHIPPING

Around 1840 the conditions for shipping were slowly improving. The depression was largely overcome, and the merchant fleet was steadily growing. Generally speaking, there

⁶⁴ 1 “mål” = 0,247 acres.

⁶⁵ In 1850, the ironworks at Nes and Froland employed 170 and 62 workers respectively. Slettan, op. cit.: 216.

⁶⁶ My translation.

came to be a strong increase in foreign trade, and Norwegian shipowners joined in the upswing.

In 1845, there were 700 ships registered in the district, one quarter of the Norwegian merchant fleet. In the 1870s, at the peak of the golden years of the tall ships, the two neighbouring counties employed 15,000 seamen on their ships.⁶⁷ A large portion of those seamen came from farms in the rural districts where they combined work as a seaman and a farmer. For many, seafaring was part of a yearly cycle, and it also tended to be part of a life-cycle as life as a seaman was reserved to early years.

The lively trade across the Skagerrak to Jutland was in many ways a prelude to the tall-ship-era that was to follow. When the small-cargo trade culminated between 1840 and 1850, fairly small yachts had made up to ten trips during a summer season, exporting timber and bringing home foodstuffs.

A major obstacle in the development of shipping had been the British Navigation Act. Earlier, trade with Britain was paramount, but as the British wanted to protect their own shipping activities, the act more or less forced Norwegian shipowners to find their market elsewhere. When the act was revoked in 1849, this opened the way for free trade policies, and decisively inspired and boosted international trade on Norwegian keels.

The new situation led to a substantial economic growth on the southern coastline. These were the golden years, an era of tall ships, weaving their net of trade across the globe, and making the “southerners” the freighters of the world.

Eventually, in his 1856-1860 report, the County Governor put aside his preference for those who till the soil, and must admit: “Shipbuilding of all kinds is such an important activity in the coastal areas that one could say that it makes the foundation for prosperity and strength.”⁶⁸

The foundation for the golden era in the district was laid in the 1840s with the extensive upswing in the freight-market. The following decade brought about the development that would make Grimstad and its surrounding area one of the major shipping centres in the country. Some selected figures exemplify the growth of the town’s fleet.

⁶⁷ Slettan, *op. cit.*: 220.

⁶⁸ My translation.

In 1849, Grimstad customs district sailed a fleet of 4,500 “kommerselester”.⁶⁹ In 1860 this volume had increased to 13,000 “kommerselester”. In 1865, 112 ships belonged to the town, and those ships were jointly owned by 48 parties, perhaps another local democratic trend. In other words, risk and capital were spread on many hands. But times were favourable, business was good, and there was ample work for those who wanted to sail the seas. In 1880, seafaring employed 9,200 men in the county, but the tide had now turned; the need for manpower in Grimstad alone slumped from 2,094 in 1875 to 1,450 in 1880, and further to 893 in 1901.⁷⁰

The powerful expansion in shipping and shipbuilding, starting in the 1840s and accelerating into the 60s and 70s, had important repercussions in land-based activities. Many ships were built in the owners’ home districts, and the shipyards gave work to a variety of skilled workers: carpenters, sailmakers, and ropemakers. In a wider circle, all sorts of trade flourished, while the surrounding rural areas harvested their share of the business through food supplies and timber for the yards. In the case of Grimstad, ships were built on nearly 40 local yards in the 1860s. Many of these yards were small, and sometimes only operated for a short while, but they offered work to about 1,000 men at the peak of activity.

In both seafaring and shipbuilding, Nedenes Fogderi was in the national forefront in the period 1830-1865. As the County Governor aptly remarked, the prosperity in the district was indeed founded on the lively activities at sea and in the yards. In an emigration perspective, it is of course of prime importance to note that the county because of the shipping traditions had a population which was accustomed to extensive geographic mobility.

The following table gives an impression of the development within shipping.

⁶⁹ 1 “kommerselest” = 2,08 register tons.

⁷⁰ Sverre Ordahl. “Utvandringa fra Agder til Amerika 1890-1915” Arfinn Engen, ed., *Utvandringa – det store oppbrotet*: 138-139.

Table 5.6:

Ships built in Nedenes Fogderi, 1836-1865; "kommerselester" and number of vessels; from the "five-year-reports".

	1836-40	1841-45	1846-50	1851-55	1856-60
Number	71	-	115	116	134
"Kommerselester"	4,963	-	10,641	13,585	17,145

"Kommerselest" = 2.08 register tons

There are no records for the period 1841-45, but it is stated that shipbuilding is considerable, and that the district exported boats to the region around Oslo. Many of those boats were built in Fjære and Landvik Parishes.

In the years 1841-1845 there were in addition built 83 full-length vessels and pilots' boats. Most of the ship-yards did not have a steady workforce, and the jobs were done by farmers, crofters, and seaside residents as a part-time occupation.⁷¹

From about 1885 the good years turned into crisis. Steampowered ironships ousted the tall-ships. Many foresaw the coming crisis, but were unable to turn the tide for lack of capital and know-how, and perhaps a lingering nostalgia for the traditional wooden ships. In any case, the golden era was brought to an abrupt stop, and unemployment and a spreading economic malaise followed.

It is interesting to observe that at a time of economic upheaval, the town of Grimstad was probably harder hit than its agrarian neighbours. During the years of economic crisis the population was reduced from 3,000 to 2,400. In a ten-year period, about one quarter of the inhabitants left the town. Within its limited borders, the town could not resort to alternative activities, whereas the rural municipalities were quick to resume and develop their basic industries of agriculture and forestry.

5.14 COMMUNICATIONS

The development of new and better ways of communication was an important prerequisite for the advance of modern times. Postal services were improved, making contact between people faster and easier, and in an economic perspective, access for farmers to markets and buyers in the towns was facilitated.

It is true that seafaring was an integral part of life on the southern coast, and that the people in the south were accustomed to impulses and contacts with foreign countries. But the

⁷¹ Tveiten, op. cit.: 60.

great improvements within infrastructure in the 1840s also stabilized and normalized passenger transport on an increasing number of new steamship routes:

- in 1839 a steamship route from Kristiansand to London and St. Petersburg,
- in 1850 a steamship route from Kristiansand to Hamburg and Hull,
- in 1870 steamship routes from Kristiansand to Gothenburg, Leith, Newcastle, Antwerp, and Stettin.

Closer to the turn of the century such routes would develop into the regular connections with emigrant ships across the Atlantic.

In the 1820s, the post road, going east-west through the Fogderi, was used for administrative purposes. The road was steep, narrow, difficult and ill-kept, and there were many complaints about hazardous travelling along the coast. At that time, “main road” has little meaning, since most traffic went on ships. There was certainly a need for improvement of the major road, and in 1824 the “the road law” put the state in charge of main roads, and the county in charge of district roads. Peasants might be instructed to spend up to eight days per year on road constructions; in the Setesdal they called this obligation “slave-work”. In addition, farmers on registered farms were also obliged to provide transportation to travelling people.

In 1840, the main road through the two counties was reported driveable, though by modern standards the road was little more than a narrow country-lane. However, the quality of the roads was steadily improved, particularly as the state put labour and money into the construction of the so-called “chaussées”, flat roads with a good foundation. The number and length of roads developed at the same pace. In 1840 the length of the roads in Nedenes County was 247 km; five years later they measured 409 km.⁷²

5.15 EDUCATION

On the verge of a modern society the level of education in the population was crucial to the development of important areas like health, economy, and the general standard of living. Giving all stratas of the population a sufficient schooling was, however, not without obstacles. Literacy was spreading, but for the rich and powerful, a public education for everybody could seem a threat. People might break their bonds, leave their class and place in

⁷² Slettan, *op. cit.*: 118.

society. The thought of giving the common man a basis to further a disturbance of the traditional social structure in the country was unwelcome.

In the countryside as well, scepticism towards public education was widespread. The opposition against time spent in school centered on the question: what good is knowledge? Why learn what is useless and unnecessary?

Literary and even intellectual interests took children away from needed and useful work on the farms. The opposition against extended education was a defense of inherited values and social structures. In the period 1840-1850 such views were put under pressure, and soon the fundamental changes in economy and business activities got their counterpart in a new view on education. From about 1850 school reforms became frequent.

The school law of 1827 set the principle of permanent schools in all parishes. There was at that time a considerable gap between schooling opportunities offered to children in the towns and the rural areas. Whereas the attitude towards the schools was positive in the towns, local councils in the rural areas tended to drag their feet and seek excuses (often financial ones) for postponing the establishment of permanent schools.

In 1837 most children in rural areas went to ambulatory schools. Less than one quarter of the children received rudimentary teaching in writing, and only 10% were taught elementary arithmetic. Statistical material from 1837, shows that Nedenes County had only nine permanent schools in the rural areas.⁷³

In 1840 ca. 8% of the children attended permanent schools. At the same time the children in the ambulatory schools got 48 days of teaching per year.⁷⁴

Running a rural school in the 1840s was not always easy. Truancy was a permanent problem because of everyday matters like clothing, shoes, long distances, and the usual complaint that the children were needed at home. Local councils were unwilling to spend money on school buildings and material, and the quality of teaching reflected the ill-trained and ill-paid teachers who rotated from district to district. In 1839 a cornerstone in the process of improving teaching was placed in Holt Parish as the the first regional two-year teachers' seminary was opened.

⁷³ Christian Holst, *Statistiske Tabeller vedkommende Undervisningsvæsenets Tilstand 1837* (Christiania: efter Foranstaltning af den Kgl. Norske Regjerings Departement for Kirke- og Undervisningsvæsenet, 1840). Quoted by Slettan, op. cit.: 102.

⁷⁴ M. Braun Tvethe, *Norges Statistik* (Christiania: Chr. Tønsbergs Forlag, 1848): 342.

5.16 EMIGRATION

On the south-western coast emigration was considerable in the decade 1846-55; in this period 2,480 emigrants from Nedenes County went overseas, i.e. yearly 4.4 per thousand of the median population.⁷⁵ The remoter areas of the Setesdal region saw some few emigrants in the 1830s, but migration from the coastal areas started in the 40s.

Emigration from the Agder region came to a rather abrupt stop from about 1855. In the ten following years, only 255 people emigrated from Nedenes County. In a general way, the flourishing shipping activities absorbed the growing number of people in need of work. It was only from the 1880s that the tide turned, and widespread unemployment in shipping and shipping-related industries fuelled massive waves of mass-emigration. There is a clear quantitative difference between the pioneer-phase and the ensuing period of mass-emigration. But of course, the initial phase is of importance because it in many respects determined the future pattern of emigration, and also removed impediments of a psychological character.

Official statistics from the period sums up the situation, also pointing to regional fluctuations and characteristics:

*Table 5.7:
Official figures of emigration, 1836-65; selected counties and country.*⁷⁶

County	Number of emigrants, 1836-45	Number of emigrants, 1846-55	Number of emigrants, 1856-65	Pr. 1.000 of med. pop., yearly, 36-45	Pr. 1.000 of med. pop., yearly, 46-55	Pr. 1.000 of med. pop., yearly, 56-65
Nedenes	-	2,480	255	-	4.4	0.4
Oppland	10	6,510	7,211	-	6.0	6.0
Buskerud	1,110	3,900	5,210	1.4	4.5	5.5
Telemark	2,800	5,700	4,563	4.0	7.6	5.8
Sogn og Fjordane	530	3,600	6,656	0.7	4.5	7.9
Rogaland	950	2,600	3,998	1.3	3.1	4.1
Hordaland	750	2,700	4,531	0.8	2.7	4.2
Norway	6,200	32,270	39,350	0.5	2.3	2.5

⁷⁵ Svaalestuen, op. cit.: 72.

⁷⁶ Svaalestuen, op. cit.: 69.

5.17 RELIABILITY OF SOURCES

In his thesis from 1974, Helge Ove Tveiten claims that he found 1,440 emigrants from Nedenes Føgderi prior to 1860; of these, 460 persons left before 1850. His sources were in the main passport protocols and church records. In his evaluation of the two sources, Tveiten maintains that the passport protocols have their inaccuracies, but are relatively trustworthy when it comes to information about age, occupation, and residence. Concerning the volume of emigration, the passport protocols have a high degree of reliability, and the main impression is that these protocols register real emigration from the relevant districts.

The church records, on the other hand, are of a varying quality and value when it comes to registered emigration. They are only partially accurate, and often seem to be the rather personal product of a clergyman's interest and motivation. As a consequence, they should not be trusted as sole sources of information.

Gerhard B. Naeseth used a variety of sources to establish the volume of emigration. His material is mainly built on the examination of Norwegian church records, American church records, passenger lists, American census reports, Norwegian volumes of local history, various books on emigration (Flom, Blegen, Ulvestad, Helgeson, and Anderson), and letters from America.⁷⁷ The two historians corresponded and exchanged material, and to a certain degree agreed on their findings, but also with tangible discrepancies.

Naeseth found 332 of the 460 emigrants who left before 1850. Through letters and publications like *Norge og Amerika*, Tveiten claims to have discovered proof that another 84 persons really arrived in America. 37 persons are therefore not accounted for. In this group there may be seamen who were simply on their way to some port. It is on the whole difficult to be certain about the fate of this group.

On the other hand, Naeseth found 23 persons who had arrived in America, but were not listed in the passport protocols before 1850. A possible explanation is that we are dealing with people who might have got their passports elsewhere or seamen who defected from their ships in American ports.

In a renewed close reading of the Norwegian material concerning Landvik Parish, I have found that Tveiten's figures probably are correct. The scope has been widened, taking into consideration more sources, and cross-checking these with the original passport protocols

⁷⁷ Gerhard B. Naeseth. *Norwegian Immigrants to the United States: A Biographical Directory, 1825-1850, vols. I-II* (Madison, MI: The Anundsen Publishing Company, 1993, 1997).

and church records. My count then concurs with Tveiten: 132 persons emigrated from Landvik Parish in the period 1843-60. There may be additional names, but since they are only listed by Tveite, they are not counted or registered in the register.⁷⁸

The question of reliability of sources is then one of balance and priority. Information must be weighed, and in general the basic principle should be to seek confirmation in a number of original sources.

Table 5.8:

Emigration from selected parishes in "Nedenes Fogderi", 1843-60; based on own research and material from Tveiten and Naeseth.

Parish	Number of emigrants	% of total ("Nedenes Fogderi")	Yearly emigration, per 1.000 of median population
Holt	419	29.1	7.1
Fjære	138	9.6	3.3
Eide	33	2.3	3.0
Landvik	132	9.2	4.1
Sum, "Fogderi"	1,440	100	2.5

5.18 THE COURSE OF EMIGRATION

Local tradition has claimed that the first emigrant from Nedenes Fogderi left for America in 1841.⁷⁹ She was Ragnhild Gundersdotter from Barbu, and had come from Telemark, and she may be an example of the internal migration which in its turn enhanced emigration. On a general pattern, the impulses for emigration spread from the west coast to eastern valleys in e.g. Telemark, and then south to the present-day Agder counties.

In 1843 four new emigrants followed, but already the next year the number of emigrants had increased to 29. These were people from Tromøy, Holt, Froland, and Landvik Parishes. In 1845, 25 emigrants left the country. The next year, 92 people undertook the voyage, up till then the climax of emigration from the district. In 1847 and 1849, emigration shows a decline, 49 and 47 persons then leave. In 1848, most of the emigrants had their residence in Landvik and Øyestad Parishes. By 1849, emigration has spread to a larger part of

⁷⁸ Johan Tveite. *Landvik, I* (Kristiansand: Landvik Historielag, 1961).

⁷⁹ In reality, people had emigrated from Nedenes County to America as early as the 1830s. One example is Knud Sørensen Bie (1812-1884) from Grimstad, who settled in Florida around 1830. He was known as John Johnson, had his home in Jacksonville, worked as a pilot, and was in the following years joined by other relatives. Johan A. Wikander. "Fra Grimstad til Florida i 1830-årene" *Utvandrer nummer, Medlemsskrift* 30 (Selskapet for Grimstad Bys Vel, 1975): 71-85.

the Fogderi, and the number of emigrants has risen to 215. Even though we now see a spread to most parishes in the area, the exodus is dominated by five parishes: Østre Moland, Øyestad, Holt, Fjære, and Landvik. In 1850, there was yet another increase: 218 persons emigrated, i.e. 6‰ of the median population in the Fogderi. More than three quarters of the emigrants came from the four parishes, Østre Moland, Øyestad, Fjære, and Landvik. In those four parishes, the emigrants represented 11‰ of their median population, a high figure, considering the time. In 1851, the number of emigrants sank drastically, to 31 persons. More than one third of these came from Fjære Parish.

Up to 1852, most emigrants had come from the western parts of the Fogderi. From 1852, the situation changed dramatically; now the eastern region became the main emigration district.

By 1852, emigration was again on the increase: 93 persons. The focus was on Holt Parish, sending about 21‰ of the median population overseas. To put it differently, more than three quarters of the number of emigrants this year came from Holt Parish.

1853 represents the peak year of emigration from Nedenes Fogderi. Out of 353 emigrants, as many as 171 were residents in Holt. The figures of that particular parish, reached a staggering 49‰ of the median population. The Fogderi as a whole, experienced that 9,9‰ of the median population left for America.

In 1854, emigration from Nedenes Fogderi was yet again on the decrease. Although the number of emigrants this year was relatively high, 189, this is really the end of a busy era; when we reach 1855, emigration from the Fogderi is over for the time being. Only 17 persons left for America, and whereas the rest of the country saw increasing numbers of emigrants, especially in 1857 and 1861, both Nedenes Fogderi and Nedenes County were left passive or perhaps uninterested spectators to a gathering wave of emigration.

In sum, we are therefore dealing with a course of emigration from Nedenes County which gets an early start in the 1840s, blossoms in 1849-50, reaches its climax in 1852-54, and dwindles away in 1855 when ready hands began to find ample employment in the shipping industry.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ The course of emigration is based upon Tveiten's material; the conclusion is found in Tveiten, op. cit.: 96.

5.19 INLAND COMMUNITIES VS. COASTAL COMMUNITIES

From the perspective of inland vs. coastal communities, it becomes clear that 68.6% of the emigrants in the period 1843-60 came from the inland communities. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that there is a connection between geographic situation and economic structure. To put it differently, we are seeing a centre – periphery situation. The towns and villages in Nedenes County were hardly affected by the first wave of emigration, which was a typical rural movement.⁸¹

The coastal communities' share in the first wave was only 31.4%. One should also bear in mind that these districts were more populous than their inland counterparts. The coastal districts increased their population strongly between 1855 and 1865, but in the same period there is only a slight growth in the rural districts, in fact, there was stagnation in the population in Robyggelaget Fogderi.

1,572 persons emigrated from Nedenes County in the five-year-period 1851-55. Only 706 came from Nedenes Fogderi. On the other hand, 866 were residents in Robyggelaget Fogderi, representing 12.4% of the median population in the period.⁸²

Emigration to America from Nedenes County was low in the period 1856-65. According to Tveiten, it is probable that geographic mobility in the county after 1855 did not necessarily decline, but found other channels than in the previous decade. After 1855, the coastal communities, the towns and villages, became a sort of “Promised Land” for people from inland and rural districts, until the close of the century when the golden era of the tall ships had come to an end.

5.20 VOLUME AND DESTINATION

According to the passport protocols, 1,458 persons applied for passports in the period 1843-60, stating America or a European port as their destination. Tveiten found that 14 persons took out their passports twice, and four persons settled in Sweden.⁸³ The final number of emigrants from Nedenes Fogderi in the mentioned period is therefore likely to be 1,440. Most of them gave “America” as their destination, in fact 89.6%; 0.2% were heading for New

⁸¹ Tveiten, op. cit.:96.

⁸² There are examples of inland parishes which were drastically drained of inhabitants. Gjøvdal is such a community: in 1850, 107,6% of the median population emigrated; in the period 1843-60, the average figure was 14,8%. On the coast, Holt Parish never surpassed 7,1%. Ingrid Semmingsen and Tolv Aamland. *Agder og Amerika* (Oslo: Nordmanns-Forbundet, 1953): 19-20.

⁸³ Tveiten, op. cit.: 97.

York, and 3.2% said they were leaving for America via France, another 0.6% gave America via Le Havre as their goal, and finally 1.2% travelled to America via Hamburg.⁸⁴

In all, 5.2% of the emigrants travelled via a European port. How many of these really intended to go to America, or really reached America, is hard to say. There are, however, cases of farmers' families making their voyage to Le Havre; in these instances it would be fair to assume that we are dealing with emigrants to America. We may also assume that there are some seamen among the 5%, but that figure should be linked to the considerable number of Norwegian sailors who deserted their ships in American ports.⁸⁵

On the basis of Naeseth's material, Tveiten's analysis,⁸⁶ and information in the letters contained in the "Iglan archives" and American census records, it is possible to establish the following survey.

*Table 5.9:
Destinations in America; selected parishes in Nedenes County; emigration before 1851:*

Parish	Wisconsin	Texas	Missouri	Illinois	Minnesota
Holt	5	28	4	0	0
Landvik	13	0	40	1	1
Fjære	0	0	34	0	0
Eide	0	0	27	0	0
"Fogderi"	67	48	180	1	1

The majority of the immigrants to Texas came from Holt and Lillesand. In fact, only two families make up most of the settlers: the Reiersen and Grøgård families. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the Reiersen/ Grøgård adventure brought little repercussion to people outside their proper families. Reiersen's very active agitation about settling in Texas found little sympathy even in his home county. It is, however, quite a different matter to value the important role Reiersen played in inspiring people in the south to take the great leap. This corresponds well with Blegen's view that at the end of the 1840s, the general influence of the agitators on the very course of emigration was relatively insignificant. In other words, family contact was far more important in choosing a destination than the incitement to emigration through agitation, but Reiersen's initial role in the "Landvik-group" is of a special nature.

Only 105 Norwegians had settled in Texas in 1850; nearly half of these came from Nedenes Fogderi, and according to Elise Wærenskjold, Norwegian immigration to Texas must

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ See e.g. Ingrid Semmingsen. *Veien mot vest, I*, (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1941): 419-20.

⁸⁶ Tveiten, op. cit.: 117.

have been meagre up to 1858 when 300 Norwegians were reported to live there.⁸⁷ The Census Reports from 1860 show that the number of Norwegians by then had increased to 326. One should observe that a relatively small share of Norwegian immigrants settled in Texas. Blegen says: “It is obvious that Reiersen’s selection of the south-west did not win popular ratification among the Norwegian common people. The upper Mississippi valley and the West continued, as before, to be the great magnet.”⁸⁸

A good number of immigrants from Nedenes Fogderi had settled in Missouri before 1851. In all, 180 persons had found their way to this region. The Census Reports of 1850 set the number of Norwegians in Missouri to 150. The reports had evidently not registered all the people who arrived in 1850. In that year, the settlement at St. Joseph welcomed no less than 56 newcomers, many of them of the Igland family.⁸⁹

5.21 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

In the following statistical survey, central features and questions are dealt with: the relative proportion of male vs. female emigrants, distribution of age, social status, civilian status, and the relationship between family- and individual emigration.

The proportion of male and female emigrants in the early emigration from Nedenes County may not be wholly typical of emigration from Norway. In Nedenes Fogderi we find a distribution of 59.7% men, and 39.8% women (0.5% of the emigrants had first names which could be either masculine or feminine).⁹⁰ By comparison, the distribution in Tinn (Telemark County) in the period 1848-62, was 51.7% men, and 48.3% women.⁹¹ Writing about early emigration from the Nordic countries, Svaalestuen claims that the relative number of men was not higher in the period of mass-emigration around the turn of the century.

Theodore C. Blegen says this about this phenomenon: “An excellent illustration of the situation is afforded in a Norwegian government report which deals with the totals of the emigration from Norway up to December 15, 1844, not including the 1836 and 1837 emigrations. Of a total emigration of 3,940, the respective numbers of men, women and

⁸⁷ Theodore C. Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America 1825-1860* (Northfield, MI: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1936): 188.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*: 189.

⁸⁹ See *Index, Part Four*.

⁹⁰ Tveiten, *op. cit.*: 99.

⁹¹ Andres Svaalestuen. *Tinns emigrasjonshistorie 1837-1907* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1972): 177.

children are 1,451, 1,061 and 1,428. The proportion represented in these figures is typical of the emigration through the fifties and indeed the entire period before the Civil War.”⁹²

Assuming that the proportion of male and female emigrants is the same among children, we should according to Blegen have the following distribution: ca. 58% men, and ca. 42% women. This would then be a typical situation among Norwegian emigrants up till the beginning of mass-emigration. These figures correspond well with the course of emigration from Nedenes Fogderi before 1860.⁹³

Table 5.10:

Proportion of male and female emigrants in selected parishes in Nedenes Fogderi, 1840- 60; sources are church records, passport protocols, and additional information from letters in the “Iceland archives”.

Parish	Men	%	Women	%	Uncertain
Holt	248	58.9	171	40.9	
Fjære	73	52.5	63	45.3	2.2
Landvik	75	56.0	59	44.0	
Eide	15	45.5	18	54.5	

(Tveiten, op. cit.: 100)

Table 5.11:

Proportion of male and female emigrants in Nedenes Fogderi, 1840-60; differences between coastal and inland communities; same sources.

District	Men	%	Women	%
Coastal	284	58.0	206	42.0
Inland	586	60.9	376	39.1

(Tveiten, op. cit.: 100)

In the matter of age, the average emigrant from Nedenes Fogderi in the early period was 23 years old. In a survey, based on information from Holt Parish, Tveiten found a corresponding figure.⁹⁴ The highest frequency for men was found in the age groups 20-24, 0 - 4, 15-19, and 25-29. For women the corresponding figures were 0-4, 5-9, 20-24, and 25 -29.

⁹² Blegen, op. cit.: 191-192.

⁹³ In a study of emigration from the Grimstad-district from 1875 to 1900, I found that the proportion of men among the total number of emigrants in that period was 63,7%. Only in 1884 was the number of women surpassed that of men. Also, in 1885, 1888, and 1889, the percentage of men came close to 80. In the case of Landvik Parish, the proportion of men in the same period, was as high as 75,7%. Erik Aalvik Evensen. *Amerikabrevene*: 143.

⁹⁴ Tveiten, op. cit.: 104.

In the last quarter of the century, the average age of the emigrants from the Grimstad district was 26 years; for Landvik Parish in particular, the age was 31.5 years.⁹⁵

The early emigration was a family event, as was also the case in Nedenes Fogderi. This is shown in the following table:

*Table 5.12:
Civilian status; adult emigrants (+20 years old) from Nedenes Fogderi, 1843-60.*

Civilian status	Number of persons	%
Married	389	42.1
Unmarried	298	32.3
Widow	28	3.0
Uncertain	209	22.6

(Tveiten, op. cit.: 105.)

Most of the persons in the category "uncertain" were probably unmarried, because families tended to travel together. In Tinn parish (Telemark County), Svalestuen states that 47.2% of adult emigrants in the period 1848-62 were married; 48.9% were unmarried. In a national perspective, the high number of families among the emigrants was replaced by a growing number of young and unmarried people near the turn of the century.⁹⁶

Tveiten has further used the passport protocols to group emigrants, i.e. people travelling together. He found 250 such groups, with an average of 4.5 persons per group. Concluding from his material, relatively large groups must have undertaken the voyage together. If one concentrates on the three categories, father, mother, children, the average size of the group is five persons. This is significantly higher than the corresponding figure for Tinn (4.4),⁹⁷ and also Dovre.⁹⁸

On the basis of such a grouping, Tveiten concludes that at least 74.4% of the emigration from Nedenes Fogderi in 1843-60, was family emigration. Adding the element of "postponed" emigration, i.e. the father leaving for America, and bringing his family over after some time, he also maintains that the family emigration from Nedenes Fogderi totalled 1,165

⁹⁵ Evensen, op. cit.: 144.

⁹⁶ Again resorting to the Grimstad-district as an example, the percentage of families among the emigrants in the period from 1880 to 1900, slumped from about 55% to 30%. Evensen, op. cit.: 145.

⁹⁷ Svalestuen, op. cit.: 180.

⁹⁸ Arnfinn Engen. *Oppbrot og Omlegging* (Thesis, University of Oslo, 1973): 83.

persons, or 80.9% of the total volume. The single-person emigration would then be 19.1%. It is noteworthy that Tinn in the period 1848-62 saw a family emigration which reached 77%.⁹⁹

In the early period, emigrants from Nedenes Fogderi tended to be farmers, crofters, or dayworkers. This tendency is reflected in time of departure; in other words, time of emigration gives an indication of the emigrants' social status.

*Table 5.13:
Month of emigration; emigrants from Nedenes Fogderi, 1843-60:*

Month	%
January	2.9
February	4.3
March	12.9
April	30.0
May	16.3
June	12.2
July	3.7
August	7.7
September	6.4
October	1.2
November	0.4
December	2.4

(Passport protocols; Tveiten: 107)

It may seem that emigration was at its ebb during the months of harvest, a time with high demand for labour. 30% of the emigrants left in April, which is the peak month par excellence. In all, spring was the preferred season for emigration, and nearly three quarters of the total volume of emigration took place in the four months from March to June. Weather conditions in the Atlantic would of course also enhance the choice of spring and summer months; a passage in rough winter conditions was indeed a strenuous affair.

5.22 OCCUPATIONS

In many cases the passport protocols and the church records register information about occupations in the emigrant group. The recordings in the church records are, however, dependent upon the recorder's accuracy. The following survey comprises 63,8% of the total number of emigrants, but it probably catches the main tendency in the emigrants' occupational attachment.

⁹⁹ Tveiten, op. cit.: 106.

Table 5.14:
Occupations in the emigrant group, Nedenes Fogderi, 1843-60:

Occupation	Main person	Family members	Sum	%
Artisans	35	82	117	12.6
Peasants	83	339	422	45.4
Crofters	22	68	90	9.7
“Innerster”, i.e. pensioners on own farm	7	10	17	1.8
Seamen (also ship’s carpenters)	50	42	92	9.9
Teachers	7	9	16	1.7
Officials	3	8	11	1.2
Merchants	2	4	6	0.6
Workers (iron works)	32	75	107	11.5
Miners	2	6	8	0.9
Servants	31	1	32	3.4
Soldiers	1	0	1	0.1
Sum	275	644	919	100

(Passport protocols; church records; Tveiten: 111)

Most noteworthy is the high number of peasants, and the relatively low number of seamen. One should, however, bear in mind that the southern region traditionally was a multi-occupational district. People tended to rely on more than one income, often combining farming with seafaring. Therefore, behind the term “peasant” may well be hidden a fair number of part-time seamen and ship’s carpenters.

Through his study of Holt Parish, Tveiten has also highlighted the changes in occupations in the rest of the Fogderi. Such a survey would then reflect the changing fortunes within main industries in the 1840s and 50s.

Table 5.15:
Changes in some occupations, Holt Parish, 1843-55; main persons and family members.

Occupation	1843	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	1855
Peasants	0	16	5	41	16	22	64	83	10	13	79	29	0
Crofters	0	0	0	5	0	0	18	12	0	5	35	15	0
Artisans	1	6	4	1	0	0	27	21	11	4	32	7	1
Seamen	0	2	0	0	6	12	24	8	0	2	22	15	1
Ironworkers	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	4	3	26	46	25	0

(Tveiten: 115)

It should first be noted that the situation in Holt was not typical for the rest of the region. The parish was highly dependent upon the ironworks, and when the crisis hit those works in the early 1850s, economic problems and unemployment literally forced the workers into emigration. The general picture was that almost everybody who emigrated from Holt Parish in the period 1851-55, was fully or partly employed in the ironworks. In a balanced picture, the prevalence of ironworkers among the emigrants in the eastern part of the Fogderi then increases the proportion of peasants and crofters in the western part.¹⁰⁰

5.23 TRANSPORTATION

The voyage undertaken by the early emigrants was a strenuous one. For people in remote valleys the mere sight of the ocean must have been frightening. The emigrants from Nedenes Fogderi had at least one barrier of communication less than the people from the upper valleys: they literally lived at the point of departure, with easy access to ports of embarkation. In addition, the district saw the beginnings of a blooming shipping industry, and seafaring was part of a deeply rooted tradition. It is true that America was not a common goal in the 1840s, but the export of iron bars had started in the 1840s, and ships had begun combining freight with passenger transport.

Before 1850, several ships were engaged in carrying emigrants across the Atlantic, and Naeseth's passenger lists give a couple of handful of ships' names.

*Table 5.16:
Emigrant ships before 1850; passengers from Nedenes Fogderi.*

Ship's name	Number of passengers	% of emigrants before 1850
<i>Washington</i>	14	2.8
<i>Juno</i>	33	6.7
<i>Vikingen</i>	87	17.7
<i>Statsraad Hegemann</i>	22	4.5
<i>Ino Urquhart</i>	13	2.6
<i>Alesto</i>	5	1.0
<i>Præciosa</i>	5	1.0
<i>Magnolia</i>	8	1.6
<i>North Carolina</i>	12	2.4
<i>Ancona</i>	10	2.0
<i>Frithiof</i>	2	0.4
<i>Grethe Lovise</i>	79	16.2
Unidentified	201	40.9

¹⁰⁰ Tveiten, op. cit.: 115.

Fewer than 60% of the emigrants were found in the passenger lists, and the figures may therefore be inaccurate. It is certain, however, that *Vikingen* carried quite a number of passengers, and a good many people also boarded *Juno*, *Statsraad Hegemann*, and *Grethe Lovise* (1846).

From a shipowner's perspective, Sven Svensen has described how the shipping of emigrants was organized in the 1840s in Nedenes Fogderi:

*When a ship-owner decided to send a ship over Quebec or New York with emigrants, he spread the news widely; often he would send a man on a mission to hire passengers. ... Before departure, ship, crew, and passengers were examined by the Chairman of the health commission, a doctor of medicine. On the day of departure, the vicar would come down to speak words of farewell. Transportation was 25 spd. to 30 spd. for adults bringing their own food, 50 spd. if meals were served onboard. The ships could carry 150-400 passengers.*¹⁰¹

At least six ships based in the Grimstad-district, and owned by people from the same area, were engaged in the early transportation of emigrants:¹⁰²

- The full-rigged vessel *Nordpolen*, 350 register tons; built in 1815 in Stockholm. Original name was *Scandinavian*, but was renamed in 1850 when she was bought by a group of part-owners in Grimstad. Among the owners were Morten Smith Pettersen and the vicar in Fjære parish, Axel Christian Pharo. The ship regularly sailed to Quebec with emigrants.
- The full-rigged vessel *Ugland* (later a bark), 460 register tons; built in Vikkilen, Grimstad in 1858.
- The bark *Lyna*, 400 register tons; built at Fevik, Grimstad in 1859. Shipwrecked in the North Sea.
- The brig *Frihandel*, 240 register tons; built in 1848 for a group of part-owners in Grimstad. Shipwrecked outside New York in 1851.

¹⁰¹ Sven Svensen, *Tvedestrand 1836-1936* (Oslo: Fabritius & Sønner, 1935): 211-212. Quoted by Tveten, op. cit.: 110. My translation.

¹⁰² Information about the six ships is found in the following sources: *Grimstad Bys Historie*: 545-546; *Grimstads Sjøfarts Historie*: 109-117; H. Drevdal and Just Storvold. "Litt om emigrantfarten til Amerika" *Utvandrer nummer 30* (Selskapet for Grimstad Bys Vel, 1975): 59-64.

- The brig *Normand*, 280 register tons; built in Vestrebukt, Grimstad in 1854. Fredrik Crawford was managing owner. Shipwrecked in 1894.
- The schooner *Grethe Lovise*, 60 register tons; built in 1837 in Grimstad. Owned by Mogens Dahl. Destiny unknown.

5.24 SUMMING UP

In a simplified explanation, emigration from Nedenes County in the initial phase was determined by certain long-term and short-term factors.

First among the long-term factors is the development of the population. Indeed, a population explosion had begun around 1815, due to “peace, potatoes and vaccination.” The rapid growth and the cyclic movements in the population were of such a nature that the district contained particularly many persons aged 20-30 years at a time when emigration from the region reached its peak (1849-53). There were at that time in the county large classes of young people eager to emigrate.

In addition, the coastal areas of Nedenes Fogderi were the recipient of a considerable internal migration, from Robyggelaget Fogderi and Telemark County. Such internal migration is generally seen to enhance the chances of later emigration. Also, the southern region struggled with the economic aftermath of the war with England, and took a long time to recover from the dark years between 1807 and 1814.

First to be mentioned among the short-term factors is the trade-crisis in 1848. Nedenes Fogderi had come far in the direction of replacing a barter economy with a more modern money economy. Industries like shipbuilding, iron works, and forestry were important in the district. It is reasonable to assume that the economic crisis of 1848 must have hit hard in the area.

It seems, however, that particularly many farmers emigrated. This must be connected to the deep changes in farming and agriculture, but it may also be rooted in the problems with the dry-rot in potatoes in the mid 40s. The county was a potato-growing district of importance.

Tveiten has also shown that political and social unrest which followed the economic crisis point in the direction of a connection between the Thrane movement and emigration.

On a personal level, disappointments and sorrows may have led to emigration. Also, the activities of local pioneers like Johan Reinert Reiersen and Elise Wærenskjold certainly contributed strongly in clarifying the alternative of emigration for people on the southern coast, although family relations across the ocean soon became of an even higher importance.

The peculiar thing about the emigration from Nedenes County is its strange course. After some high numbers of emigrants in 1847-49, in 1850, and 1853, it seemed that Nedenes Fogderi was heading for a leading position in the emigration race. In 1855, however, the figures of emigration sank to a minimum, and stayed low all the way up to the mid 80s. The causes of this development must be sought in economic relations, first and foremost the upswing in shipping and shipping-related industries from the 1850s onward, and the ensuing economic disaster from the 1880s onwards.

As indicated in the introduction, however, macro- and micro-level considerations must be supplemented and balanced by Thomas Faist's meso-level concept. In the still stagnant world of early 19th century Norway, forces were gathering to prepare and make possible the tearing down of the old and fixed social stratification, and open the way for the advance of modern Norway. In the new society mobility was important, coupled with the growing awareness of self-reliance. Despite traditional contacts with the continent, the southern coastal strip remained in many respects of marginal importance. The sea linked all the little maritime communities, and numerous ties with other European countries were in the process of being re-established in the 1840s. After 1826 the first coastal steamers brought the communities even closer. On the whole, however, communications with the rest of the country remained, until well into the 19th century, almost as primitive as they had been. Frank G. Nelson compares this situation to New England in the same period, and maintains that the coast differed from the interior.¹⁰³ In the south the general level of education was higher than in most of the hinterland, agriculture and technology more advanced, the outlook more cosmopolitan. In the most remote valleys, a fundamentally medieval way of life survived.

In the first decades of the 19th century, something of an afterglow of the enlightenment and the age of reason lingered in quiet country parishes. Nedenes Fogderi also had its *philosophes*, men of reading, reason and curiosity who forwarded projects for the betterment

¹⁰³ "Introduction" to the *Pathfinder*: 6. Johan Reinert Reiersen. *Pathfinder for Norwegian Emigrants*, translated by Frank G. Nelson (Northfield, MI: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1981).

of mankind. Some of the most influential men in this group lived near Holt Parish, and exerted a profound cultural impact, specially also upon prospective emigrants who were striving to liberate themselves from the bonds of the old ways. They were the wealthy and philanthropic Jacob Aall at *Nes Verk* (the ironworks), Pastor Nicolai Tvede of Holt Church, Ole Reiersen, schoolmaster and sexton, and Pastor Hans Jacob Grøgaard, for a period residing in Vestre Moland. These men did much to shape the interests, the outlooks and the external course of Johan Reinert Reiersen's life. He was Ole Reiersen's son, and in their closely-knit family the family members shared many of the same interests and values.

When Johan Reinert Reiersen began his career as editor of *Christiansandsposten*, he was soon on the battle line for liberal causes, not least emigration to America. His insatiable curiosity and omnivorous reading, combined with his knowledge of several languages and wide cultural contacts, soon made him a prominent figure in the southern emigration movement. He was a forerunner and pathfinder, and clearly other men of learning and reading were attracted by his personality and example, for instance the "uncommonly well-read farmers" from Hommedal Parish, to use Reiersen's own words. In this way, liberal trends and cultural impulses interacted with each other, and were nurtured and strengthened by family ties and group attachments. Basically, this cultural element forms the core of the "meso-level", and is, figuratively speaking, the source from which the coming emigrants in Hommedal Parish found the strength to choose a course of their own, in defiance with the wishes of official Norway.

The new demands for spiritual freedom and material prosperity had grown considerably in the 1840s, and had repercussions downward in the social strata. Such new demands could not always be met, healthy children had become too numerous, people did not want to stick to their last, and sought emigration as a means to secure their family and fulfil their dreams.

In the middle 1850s, however, it seems that people were more or less satisfied with the prospects in the region. The breaking up of the old society could run its course relatively unhampered, and the possibilities of finding a livelihood and climbing the social ladder were good enough for people to remain in the district. In fact, Nedenes Fogderi became the scene of heavy influx from other districts up till about 1885.

**CHAPTER VI:
THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOMMEDAL
PARISH (LANDVIK AND EIDE SUB -
PARISHES), 1800 – 1850**

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The sub-parishes of Landvik and Eide are up to this day joined in what is known as the Greater Parish of Hommedal. Until 1841, sparsely populated Herefoss Parish constituted a third party in the triangle. This arrangement was not only meant to facilitate and economize the work of the vicar in church matters, but it was felt to be a natural scheme since the two neighbouring parishes had concurrent interests in a lot of issues, and people moved freely across the border in a common market, in affairs of the heart as well as economic and social matters.

Travelling through Landvik Parish in the direction of Reddal, one is still impressed by the flat and fertile landscape with well-kept arable land. To the northwest the valley is bounded by a steep rock wall. This is the outer limit of an area of complex volcanic rock, consisting of red, coarse-grained granite. The formation is rounded, with a circumference of about 80 miles.

Approximately one billion years ago, volcanic magma penetrated the older deposits of quartzite, gneiss, and amphiboles. In sum these rocks are acid and constitute a poor soil for the growth of trees and plants. Towards the end of the last ice age, 10-11,000 years ago, the ice-cap began to recede, leaving large deposits of glacial moraine, named *Raet*. The moraine deposits dam up the two larger lakes in the region, *Rore* and *Syndle*. Basically, *Raet* is made up of boulders, stones, sand, silt, and clay. In this period, the ocean met the ice edge 51-55 metres above present sea level.

The loose sediments have provided the basic soil conditions for forests and other vegetation. The arable land was once sea-bottom, and the glaciers, the rivers, and the ocean have seen to the distribution of the sediments. In addition to good soil conditions in the flat lands, the surrounding mountains contain findings of copper and iron ore, quartz, feldspar, limestone, soapstone, and a little silver. These deposits have, however, never been exploited in an industrial manner.¹

The whole Grimstad area is characterized by a favourable climate. There is sufficient rainfall (1,300-1,400 mm/ year) and a relatively high median temperature to ensure good conditions for forestry. The region is made up of two zones: an inland area mainly consisting of coniferous forests, while the coastal strip is dominated by deciduous trees. Both Landvik

¹ Erna M. Solås, "Geologien i Landvik" Knut Storerud, ed. *med sol over skogkledde lier* (Tvedestrand: Landvik Historielag, 2003): 7-9.

and Eide Parishes have mainly soil conditions which give excellent growing conditions for pine and spruce, as well as oak, ash, elm, Norwegian maple, and linden. It should be added that the demand for oak in the 16th and 17th centuries severely decimated the oak forests. Somewhat simplified, the distribution of the three main types of forest was 45% pine, 33% spruce, and 20% oak.

From a geographical point of view there were, however, differences between the parishes. Landvik Parish was an inland community as well as a coastal community, with a stretch of coastline linking it to the sea, and thereby gaining access to industries connected to seafaring. There were areas of fertile land around the two centres in the parish, Landvik Parish Church and Reddal. Otherwise, the land to the north might appear barren with nearly trackless stretches of forests, grassy hills and low mountains, suitable for lumbering and grazing sheep and cattle.

There are a number of smaller – and four larger – lakes, and a lot of brooks and small rivers criss-crossing the landscape. At an early date, these water resources were used to run grist-mills and saw-mills.

The parish covered a land surface of 190.68 km²; based on the population in 1845, this gives a population density of 9.9 inhabitants pr. km², increased to 13.9 by 1900.² In Michael Drake's view, this would place Landvik Parish slightly below average in the county.³ The population grew steadily, starting at 1,237 in 1801, and reaching a temporary peak with 2,027 inhabitants in 1855.

Eide Parish, on the other hand, was small in almost all respects: population, area, and agricultural produce. A coastal community, it enjoyed the possibilities of added incomes through seafaring and fishing, the supply of provisions to ships at anchor in the harbour in Homborsund, and more peculiar, through assets like valuable mooring posts at hire for visiting ships.

The land surface was only 31.58 km²; with a population of 652 in 1845, this gives a population density of 20.6 inhabitants pr. km²; in 1900 the figure was 24.0. In Drake's survey, this places Eide among the most densely populated parishes in the county. The growth of the

² Amund Helland. *Nedenes Amt, I* (Kristiania, 1904): 492.

³ Michael Drake, op. cit.: 8.

population was rather slight, and reached its peak in 1875 with 801 inhabitants; in the last quarter of the century the population slumped to 759.⁴

Although both parishes had tracts of valuable and even rich arable and meadow, these areas were small. In the case of Landvik, the total area was ca. 190 km², with a mere 2.4 km² of arable and 4.7 km² of meadow; or, put differently, 1.2% and 2.5% of the total area. Eide was smaller in every respect: 0.7 km² of arable, 1.3 km² of meadow (2.2% and 4.1% of total area).⁵

As mentioned, only 0.7 km² of the total area in Eide Parish was registered as good, cultivated land; this made for small-scale farming, but the quality of the soil must have been excellent: in a comment to the Census Returns in 1845, the yield of wheat and rye was reported to be 12 and ten times; corresponding figures in Landvik were ten and eight fold respectively.⁶

In local, popular opinion both parishes still have a reputation for being fertile, sheltered and god-fearing communities. Generally speaking, this is the reason why “Canaan” has been attached to Eide Parish in particular.⁷ In a historical perspective, however, such an epithet might be oversimplified and even misleading. It enhances the idea of lush and abundant pastoral life, whereas the actual situation for all parishes in Nedenes County in the decades that followed the war with England was one of strife for the daily bread, and a fight to get on an equal level with the relatively good pre-war years.

6.2 DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT, 1801-1855

Table 6.1:

*Demographic development, Eide and Landvik Parishes; Nedenes Fogderi, 1801-1855; numerical and increase/ decrease in %.*⁸

Parish	1801	%	1815	%	1825	%	1835	%	1845	%	1855	%
Eide	530	-	495	-6.6	629	+27.0	640	+1.7	652	+1.9	693	+6.3

⁴ Helland, op. cit.: 492.

⁵ Ibid.: 3 and 149-150.

⁶ Census Returns, 1845. Statsarkivet i Kristiansand/ *State Archives*.

⁷ Birger Dannevig in his book on Eide Parish (1972, 1984), also mentions one of the leading sea captains who had imported wine and rather regularly drank wine to his meals, thereby fuelling both a slight jealousy and disgust among his fellow men, and establishing the impression that Eide Parish was indeed a place for lush life - Canaan.

⁸ Census returns, 1801-1855; printed statistics. The printed statistics from the period vary slightly compared to Helland's figures (Helland, op. cit.: 492): Helland maintains that the “Fogderi” grew by 6 inhabitants from 1801 to 1815, census returns claim a loss of 10; and by 1845 he sets the population in the county at 47.738 (excluding the towns); the census returns say 47.730.

Landvik	1,237	-	1,226	-	1,518	+8.4	1,690	+11.3	1,890	+11.8	2,027	+7.2
				0.9								
“Fogderi”	22,536	-	22,526	-	28,303	+25.6	29,543	+4.4	33,859	+14.6	37,370	+10.4
				0.1								

The population in Nedenes Fogderi comprised 22,536 inhabitants in 1801; it decreased slightly up till 1815, when the total number was 22,526. This represents a loss of 0.1%. By 1825 the population had grown to 28,303, or an increase of 25.6%. The strong growth of the population continued by uneven leaps in the following years: by 4.4% from 1825 to 1835, and by another 14.6% in the next decade. In the whole period from 1801 to 1845 the national population increased by ca. 50%; the figure for Nedenes Fogderi, lengthening the period to 1855, is of the same magnitude: 65.8%.

For the county as a whole, the increase in the population from 1801 to 1855 was 62%. In this development, there was a tendency which came to accelerate towards the end of the century: the coastal communities in the Fogderi would become the goal of an internal migration from inland communities towards the coastal ones. This means that the growth of the population along the coast would considerably surpass that of Råbyggelaget.⁹

Both Landvik and Eide Parishes followed much the same pattern, although the increase of the population was uneven and picked up its momentum at different times. The two parishes saw a slump in their populations in the years between 1801 and 1815, Eide lost 6.6%, whereas Landvik was less severely affected with -0.9%. This is not wholly unexpected since the coastal communities were more dependent upon seafaring activities, which in their turn were drastically affected by the embargo during the war. In the following decade the tide turned dramatically in the case of Eide Parish; an increase in the population of 27.0% is exceptional. These new citizens would reach their most reproductive age in the years 1840 to 1855, and may have constituted a push-power to encourage the early emigration. After all, a steadily growing population meant more new inhabitants to feed. Landvik Parish on the other hand, showed a more even growth, with increases ranging from 8.4% to 11.8% per annum in the decades between 1825 and 1855.

This development then underscores the underlying differences in the economic patterns in the two parishes. On the one hand, we have Eide Parish with traditional and close ties to all kinds of seafaring activities, on the other hand, Landvik Parish very much rooted in traditional farming, but also with a view to the sea, though on a smaller scale.

⁹ Tveiten, op. cit.: 17-18.

The overall picture for the two parishes in the period from 1801 to 1855, is that they both experienced a strong growth of their populations, but only one of them reached the level of the amazing 65.8% in the Fogderi. In fact, the increase in Eide Parish was 30.8%, and in Landvik Parish 63.9%. In any case, this development entailed far more mouths to feed in a district with limited farming resources. The basic issue is then one of balance: how could farm produce – or in broader terms, food supplies – keep pace with a rapidly growing population? And, in cases of possible local food shortages, were there other sources of income which might counter-balance such a troublesome state of affairs?

In general terms, this development would surface around the 1840s. This critical period is, however, in many ways contrasted to easier times around the turn of the century.

6.3 VISITORS FROM ABROAD

In the late summer of 1800, two Englishmen landed at Ny Hellesund, and went via Kristiansand eastwards along the coast. They were John William Edy and William Fearnside, both artists from London, and on a mission from the well-known publisher John Boydell. The intention of the expedition was to make sketches and drawings as a preparation for etchings to be included in a volume on Norway and Norwegian landscapes.¹⁰

William Edy was undoubtedly the more active artist of the two, and when *Boydell's Picturesque Scenery of Norway* eventually was printed in 1820, six of Edy's etchings from Landvik were included together with five texts.

The two companions were in many ways a product of and influenced by the Romantic era in England. Their journey to Norway bore the unmistakable mark of an expedition into the exotic, with a clear expectation of finding pastoral landscapes, often dramatic and untainted by civilization, where proud and free Norwegians lived close to a benevolent nature in the manner of Wordsworth and Rousseau. It is therefore not entirely surprising that their impulsive reaction on seeing the ruins of an old windmill at Sandkleiva, was one of jubilation and cries of hurrah!

One should therefore be very careful in taking their observations and comments at face value. In fact, they are often biased, and possibly coloured by prejudices about a primitive nation on the edge of European civilization. On the other hand, they spent close to two weeks

¹⁰ Ulf Hamran . "De to mystiske reisende. Malerne Edy og Fearnside i Norge år 1800" *By og Bygd* (1964): 117-141. For a more specific study of the drawings and texts from Landvik, see Johan Anton Wikander. "En malerisk reise gjennom Landvik år 1800" *Liv i Landvik* (1986): 153 ff.

in Landvik, travelled to remote nooks of the parish, and showed a keen interest in the doings and dealings of the people. The drawings and sketches made on location, combined with the accompanying texts, should therefore be regarded as at least an interesting glimpse into a small society still in the grip of the old ways of the early 19th century, but with resources and attitudes which point in the direction of the upheavals of the mid-century.

One of Edy's first drawings may well have been made as the two Englishmen approached the valley from the west. From the old post-road they overlooked a broad and fertile valley, a pastoral idyll, seemingly peaceful and in harmony. There were stacks of timber near the lake shore,¹¹ and the road went on to the church, *Landvik gård* (farm), and the vicarage. On a distant hill, one might discern a windmill.

At Landvik gård the two visitors were greeted by the owner, Thomas Fasting, "a very hospitable and worthy man". Here they found their lodgings. Mr. Fasting also ran an inn and was a supplier of horse and carriage transportation, and through agreeable conversations with the amiable, charming, and English-speaking inn-keeper/owner, they got to know the community.¹²

*With the exception of a singular barren rock in the lake, the scenery of Landvig is rather agreeable than romantic. The lake is well stored with fish, and the country abounds with excellent oak and fir timber, with which the inhabitants construct vessels. Mr. Fasting builds ships on the banks of the lake, and launches them over the ice by means of machinery till they have passed the bar, and arrived where there is sufficient depth of water. Here the vessels wait for the thaw to set them afloat.*¹³

¹¹ This is one of the details which points to interesting sides of the parish: the normal route for floating timber to the coast was through the waterfalls at *Rygene*. There was, however, a conflict with the salmon fisheries in the river, and when the Crown imposed taxes on the floating via the waterfalls, the peasants chose to take the timber across *Rorevannet*, over land to *Landvikvannet*, and from there to *Strandfjorden*, where ships from Holland and Scotland were waiting for a valuable cargo. The shoreline in Landvik would then be part of the common land, used by drivers and owners of the timber. Wikander, op. cit.: 154.

¹² *Landvik gård* (farm) was in 1800 the most valuable farm in the county, with a *skyld* (value) set at eight *huder* (hides). Thomas Fasting had been at sea, and ran a series of activities connected to his farm. The inn is already mentioned, and in addition, there was a windmill, a sawmill, shipbuilding on the shores of the lake, the growing of vegetables and fruit trees, forestry and agriculture. He was evidently a man of many interests and talents, and well informed about local and national matters; his problem was, however, the economy. Most of his properties were in a bad shape, he was reported for having been unable to pay his taxes, and in 1804 he was forced to sell the farm. He died in 1821, a poor and broken man. Johan Tveite, *Landvik, I*, (Kristiansand: Landvik Historielag, 1961):126.

¹³ Plate no. XIV, "View of Landvig Lake". Mr. Fasting's ships were in general smaller vessels intended for small-cargo traffic across the Skagerrak to Denmark; there is, however, also a report on the building of a brig. Wikander, op. cit.: 156.

The description of the catching of salmon near two cataracts, and the presence of Kings Christian IV and Frederick III at the same scene, brought Edy to comment on political affairs.

There can be no doubt [about] those enthusiastic, romantic, and religious feelings of love, devotion and veneration, still cherished among the peasantry towards the bare name of the King. This fact, so honourable, cheering and consoling to human nature, and more particularly creditable to the people in question, affords the most exquisite illustration of the public virtues of Christian IV, who has been justly styled the idol of Danish history, the glory of the Danish name, and the delight of human kind. ... The unlimited confidence placed by the Norwegians in the king is, however, productive of a disposition which has been much censured, but probably only by safe and flourishing politicians or cautious placemen. It is a fundamental principle with the Norwegian, that the King can do no wrong; but he is not equally liberal in extending the benefit of that principle to the king's officers, who are frequently objects of his jealousy and suspicion. [In case of conflicts with the officials] the peasant will use high words about going to Copenhagen for redress, in which he is generally seconded by the whole parish. ... [A] republican spirit now and then manifests itself among the inhabitants of the coast, owing to their frequent intercourse with England.¹⁴

A visit to *Syndlevannet* ("Lake Sinli") gave Edy another chance to play upon the theme freedom-loving Norwegians, "the Swiss of the North".

The banks of Lake Sinli present an assemblage of romantic, beautiful and interesting scenery. Cloud-capt mountains and pyramidal rocks on a large scale partially fringed with wood, detached clusters of trees, natural vistas and verdant fields, furnish the contemplative eye with perpetual succession of varied entertainment. Here a mind prepossessed with poetical representations of pastoral life, will also find ample scope for indulgence. ... Here the peasant passes some weeks in pursuits characteristic of Nomadian innocence and simplicity.

In love of country and of freedom, in impatience of oppression, in a lofty sense of the rights of humanity, in courteousness and hospitality to strangers, in hardiness of body combined with the most determined valour, in kindness of heart, in resources of

¹⁴ Plate no. XIV, "View of Landvig Lake".

*mind and in rectitude of conduct, the mass of the Norwegian people may be equalled but cannot be surpassed by the countrymen of William Tell.*¹⁵

Setting aside his lofty comments on the noble Norwegians, Edy must admit that natural conditions were not always the best, even in this verdant valley.

*But although nature assumes the same grand, awful and sublime attitudes in Norway as she does in Switzerland, she is infinitely less liberal in scattering plenty over the land. What has been already said of the precarious and scanty production of grain, is equally applicable to the pastures of Norway. ... But the size and general state of Norwegian cattle does not bespeak much luxuriance of pasturage.*¹⁶

Also other domestic animals came low on Mr. Edy's rating.

*The black-cattle are generally of a very diminutive size; an English calf will outweigh many a Norwegian ox. The native sheep, which they call Souer, are of a poor kind.*¹⁷

Returning to the inhabitants themselves, Edy touched upon a wide array of both basic and everyday issues and problems.

The inhabitants of this and other parts contiguous to the sea, differ widely, in many respects, from those of the upland; they are less hardy, and live better, at least when they have it in their power. Milk-diet is not so common among them, but their corn is better, and the sea constantly supplies them with excellent fish. They wear better and more clothes, their jackets being often made of good cloth. They are tolerably clean in their linen, especially on Sundays; and their houses, beds, and other furniture evince a degree of neatness not to be found among the inhabitants of the mountainous parts of the country. ... Their conversation turns upon seafaring people, their own observations while abroad, fisheries, agriculture, and even on the conduct of their superiors.

The condition of the common people on the coast is tolerable, when the price of grain is not exorbitant. They are allowed themselves to purchase grain on board the Danish vessels, but ready money being always required, they are generally obliged to procure

¹⁵ Plate no. XVI, "View of Lake Sinli".

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

grain from the merchants, and in return allow them to mark timber, to be felled for their benefit. Those peasants therefore who possess no woods are frequently embarrassed for grain. The condition of the peasantry is moreover greatly deteriorated by the practises of unlicensed hawkers.

But of all the evils under which the common people suffer, the total absence, or at least a most precarious administration of relief in cases of illness, is particularly to be regretted. ... Old women and itinerant quacks are chiefly entrusted with the lives of the common people. The most common diseases are dysentery, colds, putrid fever, and more particularly Radesyge.¹⁸

On visiting yet another lake, *Rorevannet*, Edy commented on the mineral resources of the region.

These mountains abound in iron ore of a singular richness. Iron forms the most important of Norwegian metals, and is generally well adapted for every kind of application. ... The iron mines of Norway, compared with those of other countries, occasion but a small expense; the strata of the ores being almost generally of an extent corresponding with their intrinsic excellence. The mountains are at the same time covered with vast forests to supply the iron works with the requisite fuel, and make ample amends for the absence of pitcoal. ... The abundance and the height of water-falls fully effect in the simplest and most economical manner all those purposes which, in other countries, require the most complicated and expensive machinery.

Thus nature herself has pointed out this branch of industry as a principal means of promoting the welfare of the country. ... The iron manufacture, while it calls the physical powers of the lower orders into action, at the same time affords ample scope for the display of their intellectual faculties. The iron manufacture of Norway must be regarded as a national blessing.

Various objections have, however, been made to the iron manufacture. It is said to occasion the destruction of the woods, to impose very oppressive burthens on the

¹⁸ Plate no. XV, "View of Lake Sinli". Edy goes into details to describe this feared illness, quoting both Norwegian and German doctors. It is said to be a milder form of leprosy, a skin disease with sores and eruptions, and often complicated with scurvy. The progress of this illness is said to be greatly promoted by the filthiness of the inhabitants in their linen, clothes and dwellings, and by their culpability in concealing the disease. The word "rade" means malignant.

*peasantry, who are compelled to furnish charcoal, and perform a variety of work at stated prices in virtue of privileges granted by law to the iron works.*¹⁹

Edy tried to counter these allegations, saying that the manufacture of iron was for the benefit of the woods; the finest woods were often found in the vicinity of the iron-works! As for privileges and oppressive work, they were matters of the past. The spirit of this system had long vanished, and at this time, the iron-works' management and the peasants were mutually satisfied. In a last paragraph on the manufacture of iron, the artist pointed to what was to become a problem in the advancement of modern society: knowledge and education.

*An almost total want of mineralogical seminaries must be considered as the first cause, why the iron works of Norway have not, generally, been conducted so much to the honour and advantage of the country as they easily might be. Experience is the chief, if not the sole guide of the Norwegian miner; to theory he has hitherto been almost an entire stranger.*²⁰

To add, the dealings and dispositions of the Danish King and his Government had also hindered the development of a truly Norwegian industry.

*The most material cause which has checked the extension of iron works in Norway, is to be found in the disinclination of Government to entertain propositions from enterprising individuals who feel desirous of establishing iron works, but whose private resources may not enable them to embark in undertakings of that magnitude without some public aid. ... But however unfortunate the court of Denmark may have been in its own commercial transactions, it never could have noticed the fact, that previous to the war with England, the value of iron annually produced in Norway amounted to upwards of a million and a half of rix-dollars, or about £300,000, sterling, without feeling impressed with a desire of extending a branch of industry, which in a commercial point of view alone, must have had signal influence on the prosperity of the country.*²¹

¹⁹ Plate no. XVII, "View of Rorvand near Arendal".

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

6.4 SUMMING UP

William Edy's report from primitive and exotic Norway is characterized by flowery language and attitudes towards society, royalty and government which certainly sound strange and old fashioned. Peeling off the the outward layer of blooming romanticism and 18th century social ideas, there is at the core, quite an astute observation of life in Landvik Parish at the turn of the century, before the tide turned and brought the country into dire straits in connection with the war.

Edy conveys a picture of a pre-war agrarian society which is not solely based upon agriculture, but also upon a rather wide array of industries and activities: forestry and export of timber, production of charcoal for the iron-works, fishing, and boatbuilding. In addition, there are also repercussions from the important iron-works in neighbouring Froland Parish.

Generally, Edy portrays a small and modest society where the means of livelihood are varied, and where resources and climate basically make the valley a fairly good place to live.

Through conversations and activities, the people of Landvik also reveal themselves as open-minded and experienced travellers, freedom-loving individuals, even with a hint of republican sympathies. They are involved in seafaring, and are in regular contact with people from abroad. On their coastline, ship from e.g. Holland, Denmark, and Scotland bring ashore goods and commodities, and put to sea with cargos of timber.

On a political level, Edy reports on the well-documented trust the peasants of Nedenes County had in the King in Copenhagen. Their attitudes towards the "Father" in Denmark, was quite different from the distrust and outright animosity they showed towards his officials, the civil servants and the bureaucracy.

On the negative side, Edy is correct in complaining about the dismal state of affairs in public health and personal hygiene. There was certainly a lack of qualified medical personnel, and the filthiness of clothes and dwellings made people easy victims of illnesses. In the following decades the situation would be greatly improved, and efforts were also made to better the level of education and learning among the people. In this respect, however, the rural parishes were in many ways left in the rear by rapidly expanding and economically blooming coastal townships.

Edy's descriptions represent a pre-war glimpse into what seemed the idyllic affairs in Landvik Parish near the turn of the century. His views are in the main fair and correct as far as they go, and they mirror a stable and even stagnant society where business was done according to age-old customs, and structures in local societies were inflexible. The contrast is

great when one considers the social and financial state of affairs in the same parish during the war years from 1807-1814, and the aftermath of those hard years.

In the 1830s and 40s, the communities along the southern coastline were still struggling to recover from the grim experiences of the embargo and the shortage of food during the war with England. Those parishes were still groping to find a financial and social footing comparable to the relatively happy years at the turn of the century. They were certainly uneasy spectators at the breakthrough of modern times, and were still mostly ignorant of the promising prospects at the dawning of golden era of the tall ships, from the 1850s onwards.

6.5 SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

As mentioned earlier, William Edy had openly criticized the level of public education among the inhabitants of Landvik Parish. The war with England also meant a set-back in this sphere of society, and it was not until the 1860s that permanent schools were firmly rooted in the parish. The quarrels over public schooling were, however, a standard issue in meetings of the parish council, and such clashes in many ways mirror the troublesome process of paving the way for modern times.

Both public schools, reading interests, open-mindedness for new cultural impulses, and the establishment of book collections (public and private) were all important elements in the new structures which would support the coming of modern Norway. Such cultural impulses were instrumental in the process of tearing down the outdated structures of society, which stressed obligations to the old order, a status quo, and mistrusted the possibilities to disrupt old traditions and break out and find a better life elsewhere. In such a perspective, the enlightenment of the common man was not always welcomed by the ruling classes, but it was a prerequisite in the painful process of liberating people from old bondage.

6.6 RECOLLECTIONS OF A TEACHER

Gert Sørensen, a school teacher for 57 years, gained one of his first teaching experiences from working in Landvik Parish in the period 1845-1859. His recollections of his career as a teacher in years of change and pedagogical upheaval were published in 1890.²² No doubt a man of vision and good will towards his school, his views are, however, sometimes

²² Gert Sørensen. *Hva jeg har opplevet: En Selvbiografi* (Arendal: 1890); his observations on Landvik Parish are found on pp. 27-47.

marred by expressions of bitterness after having been passed over in competing for new teaching positions. This bitterness is often coupled with critical attitudes towards local authorities who do not seem to realize the importance of laying the groundwork for a “modern” school system.

He came to Landvik Parish in 1845, at a time when the transition of ambulatory schools to permanent schools made for heated debates in the local rural councils. The new teacher and cantor was not offered suitable housing conditions in the parish, so he decided to live on a farm at *Tønnevold* belonging to his wife. Because of this, he had to walk to work, a distance of about four km.

After meeting with his vicar, Mr. Claudius Martini, it was decided that his first three months would follow the old order, moving from farm to farm in the manner of the ambulatory schools.

Through his report on those first three months, we get the impression of an idealistic teacher who criss-crossed the parish and came in contact with rich farmers who offered him decent food and a comfortable bed, but also had embarrassing episodes in remote crofters’ places where food was scarce and houses were cramped. There was no doubt in his mind that the obligation to feed and house a teacher was a burden for poor crofters; sometimes he would make excuses to avoid staying the night over in such places.

In another meeting with the vicar, it was decided that a permanent school would be established in a new building, also offering accomodation for the teacher and his wife. A location was chosen, a plot in the grounds belonging to the vicarage. To Mr. Sørensen’s dismay, this plan never came about in his days, the family remained on the family farm, and the permanent school in Landvik started its functions in rented quarters.

The school building was a single room, 14 by 12 feet, in all respects unsatisfactory and cramped, meant to cater for more than 100 children. This was of course impossible, although the situation was eased by a sizeable drop-out and absence. It was definitely a time when practical work on the farms was given precedence over school work. The authorities had high hopes for the new – and costly – school. From the teacher’s point-of-view these hopes were unrealistic at the start, but he took a smug pleasure in saying that after a short period, the results were good, and the school became a model for other parishes to envy. Subjects were basic: reading, writing, and a good dose of catechism.

His own financial situation was problematic. By combining his work as a teacher with obligations as a cantor in the Parish Church, the council had hoped that they might avoid paying the teacher a salary. Being a rich parish, this seemed fair, since the collections in

church and donations given at weddings and baptisms, reportedly amounted to as much as 300 “spesiedaler” a year for the cantor. In reality, this was far too optimistic, and the first year, Mr. Sørensen had an income of 108 “spesiedaler”, 11 “mark”, and 11 “skilling”. His situation improved, and at the end of his time in Landvik, his yearly income had increased to 170 “spesiedaler”.

His large school district was eventually split in two, but again there was a political row over expenses. The result was that the parish operated two permanent schools, but both in rented houses. In Mr. Sørensen’s view, the new school in Reddal (to the north-west of the parish church) could easily have been built, since it was again a district which was fairly wealthy. In the debate, arguments against spending money on a new school building reportedly centred on the assumption that most people are better off, the less they know.

In the repeated local discussions over school expenses, there is certainly a reflection of a national pattern which was established as peasants moved into political positions. They were generally over-cautious in financial affairs, advocating goals of cutting public costs, and adhering to principles of frugality, modesty, and – according to their opponents – meanness in all economic affairs.

Gert Sørensen’s quarrels with the authorities continued all the way up to 1859, when he resigned his position and moved to richer pastures. He had some support in demanding proper quarters, both for his pupils and himself, and the church in particular seems to have been on his side. A majority in the local council, did not, however, want to use that much money on the school.

His main objection to the running of school affairs in the parish seems to have been that there was no willingness or ability to see the value of a well-administered school system. There were always the counter-arguments of the costs of running a school, and that this whole new trend had been forced upon the local communities.

On the other hand, there seems to have been a counter-culture at work in Landvik Parish. There were definitely influential people who saw the advantages of a proper school, and who built remarkable book collections, helped establish the first public libraries, and in general terms lifted the level of education in the parish.

In a last comment on his years in Landvik Parish, Gert Sørensen touches upon two movements which in his mind should be accused of destabilizing religious and political affairs, both nationwide and locally.

He was sent as a representative to a congress arranged by the Mission among the Heathens. The meeting took place in Christiania in 1855. There he met with the activities of Mr. Lammers, who strongly advocated the division of state and church. He was worried by the arguments presented by this lay preacher, and on his return wrote strongly worded warnings in the local newspaper against such insubordinate thoughts, which he had seen too many examples of locally. A few years yearlier, readers of the local newspaper had also met with Mr. Sørensen's worry and scepticism in meeting with the short-lived flowering of the socialist Thrane- movement, and his arguments for retaining the status quo in society.

6.7 SCHOOL COMMISSION PROTOCOLS

The proceedings of the school commission are recorded from 1827,²³ and in most cases correspond with Mr. Sørensen's impressions of a stable and inflexible community facing changes and new demands from the approaching modern times.

The whole period from 1827 to 1862 was dominated by recurring discussions and conflicts, as well as by set characters using predictable arguments. In the background, there was all the time the question of public expenditure, and the fundamental issue about the use of education.

The meetings in the commission in 1827 were in large measure devoted to the establishment of a system of 15 school districts, where the children would attend the ambulatory school for three months per year. School payment was collected on the basis of the value ("skyld") of the farms. The 120 pupils (68 boys and 52 girls) would receive instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, and catechism. Seven teachers were employed (with scanty training), at a yearly salary of 20 "spesiedaler".

Setting up the system of 15 districts in 1827, the commission also named the 59 farms which were to be taxed on the basis of their "skyld" (value). These farms fell into three categories.²⁴ In the category of "fullgårder" (full farms), we find 11 (or 18.6% of the total); in the next category, "halvgårder" (half farms), there are 24 (or 40.7% of the total); finally, in the third category, "ødegårder (solitary farms), there are 24 (or 40.7% of the total). On average, farms in Landvik Parish would then on this basis have a value of 2 $\frac{2}{3}$ hides ("huder"), the equivalent of a so-called "halvgård" (half farm).²⁵

²³ *Landvik skolekomisjon – forhandlingsprotokol, 1827-1869* (Aust-Agder Arkivet, Arendal/ County Archives) (reg. 40758).

²⁴ Tveite, *Landvik I*, introduction.

²⁵ In a similar process of taxation in Eide Parish in 1836, we find Osul Enge on the list: his share of the school-tax was 20 "skilling". This was somewhat below the average contribution (22 $\frac{1}{2}$ "skilling"), and way below the highest sum: 72 "skilling".

In 1828 the learning progress of the pupils was evaluated, and said to be “moderate”. Shortly after, 53 pupils were examined, and they were all found to be fairly apt readers. School expenses were at this time 84 “spesiedaler”, 18 “skilling” per year.

In 1835 we get the first example of the prolonged struggle over the establishment of a permanent school in a suitable new building. For thirty years the bishop in Kristiansand would urge the parishoners in Landvik to establish such a school, he was supported by the vicar, Mr. Martini, but the majority of the peasants in the school commission would year after year use the same arguments to postpone the matter. The distance between the farms was too great, and gathering the pupils in one or two locations was simply not very practical. Above all, a permanent school was expensive, and since the parish was a poor one, the commission would humbly ask the bishop to let the matter rest. After all, the ambulatory school was functioning smoothly, and a growing number of pupils were getting an adequate education.

Every year the commission would get their plea for postponement in return, with new admonitions to go through the case yet again. In principle, the peasants did not give in, but agreed only reluctantly to establish a permanent school in rented quarters. A location was first tried in 1842 at Morholt, and later in Reddal since the first attempt was deemed unsuccessful. Reddal was evidently chosen because this was a more affluent community with 41 landowning peasants and 15 crofters. Some people reacted since the school was not established near the parish church.

1845 saw new rounds in the conflict. The bishop tried again to convince the school commission that they must build a permanent school, but the reply was the same: it was too costly, and besides, there were too few wealthy peasants to carry the economic burdens. Also, the cost of running their school had risen to 801 “spesiedaler” 66 “shilling” per year. The commission was also in charge of the poor, and they let the bishop know that they had considerable costs giving such people a decent living:

Expences for poor relief, 1845:

- 10 persons who were a burden to society (including 2 mentally insane, 1 blind, 1 deaf-mute, 1 crippled) = 365 “spesiedaler”

Put differently, Osul Enge’s income was not remarkable, rather modest. Documents reproduced in Hartvig Dannevig, *Sagaen om en Sørlandsbygd, Eide Sogns historie, I*: 386-387.

By comparison, a farm of about 160 acres in Missouri/ Kansas would roughly equal a so-called “full farm” in Norway.

- Relief for 25 persons (grain for food) = 109 “spesiedaler”, 24 “skilling”
- Expences for clothing = 79 “spesiedaler”, 42 “shilling”
- In all: = 553 “spesiedaler”, 66 “shilling”

Being hard pressed by the bishop, the commission, however, decided to give the pupils six months’ schooling, in rented locations. At the same time, people in the remote areas of the parish, still had to rely on the ambulatory school, for three months a year.

The following districts now were given the privilege of belonging to a permanent school:

Landvig, Havstad, Dolholt, Morholt, Østerhus, Lien, Aagre, Molland, Resvig, and Imenes.

The commission took pride in reporting to the bishop that the school book collection had been extended. Originally four books were used, Hersleb’s *Bibelhistorier*, Pontoppidan’s and Luther’s *Katekisme*, and Grøgaard’s *Lesebøker*. Now, new books in geography, history, and grammar had been added, as well as an atlas and maps.

Probably in an attempt to cut costs, the school commission asked permission from the bishop to reduce the number of school districts. The bishop refused to give this permission, but in an ensuing exchange of letters, it was decided to raise the number of school days in the permanent schools, and organize the ambulatory school system in four larger districts.

*Table 6.2:
Organization of ambulatory school districts, Landvik Parish, 1847:²⁶*

	Landowners	Crofters	Pupils	Schooldays
1. district	23	20	32	92
2. district	60	22	106	48
3. district	51	4	56	61
4. district	20	0	22	62
Sum	154	46	184	

By 1850, the struggle over the building of a permanent school still had not been decided. In fact, it would take another 12 years before the the issue was settled, and the school, which was built upon the grounds of the vicarage, was opened.

²⁶ *Landvik skolekommissjon – forhandlingsprotokol, 1827-1869. Aust-Agder Arkivet/ County Archives, Arendal.*

At the end of the 1840s, the peasant majority in the commission was still trying to convince the bishop that such a poor parish needed support from state funds to be able to comply with the instructions to build a school. The bishop consistently refused, and the vicar, Claudius Martini was not fully behind his parishioners, “Landvik Parish is like most parishes, on the average in economic affairs”. The bailiff, Mr. Praem, was leaning more towards the negative, “The economic situation is in no way better than in other parishes.”²⁷ Mr. Praem added that the parish mortgage debt was, by 1848, 80,001 “spesiedaler”, 83 “skilling”.

6.8 “PUBLIC LIBRARIES” AND PRIVATE BOOK-COLLECTIONS

In 1798 a charismatic and colourful Dane was appointed to the bishopric in Christiansand. He was Dr. Peder Hansen, a true-born child of the Age of Reason. Based on his ideals of rationality, he strove to spread information about all sides of the creation. Newly arrived in Christiansand, he began with much zeal and energy to promote schools and public libraries. One of his instruments was the so-called “Societies for the Advancement of Good Moral Traditions” (*Selskaber til Gode Sæders Udbredelse*)²⁸ which would in some measure be responsible for enhancing reading skills in the rural population.

In February 1801 the bishop entered the pulpit in Landvik Parish Church, and fairly bluntly built his sermon upon one of his key beliefs: “It is the very nature of Christianity to enlighten mankind.”²⁹ After such an admonition to join the reading circle local farmers found it hard to refuse membership in the good Society. In the ensuing meeting, 43 members were registered, 42 men and one woman. Later, another seven joined in.

The members were:

- Peder Hansen, bishop
- H.J. Bugge, vicar
- Thomas Fasting, farmer
- Jacob Nielsen Degn, the sexton
- Jens Brøndum, the sheriff
- Christopher Knudsen Hørthe, farmer
- Gunder Aanundsen Torp, farmer
- Lars Pedersen Igland, schoolkeeper

²⁷ My translation.

²⁸ This survey is based upon an article by Johannes Havstad. “Selskabet til gode Sæders Udbredelse i Landvig Hovedsogn” *Liv i Landvik* (1988): 330-341. The original material is deposited in Statsarkivet i Kristiansand/ *State Archives*: ”Hommedal prestearkiv, pakke A-XI-5”.

²⁹ Havstad, op. cit. My translation.

- Gunder Tolvsen Hellenen, schoolkeeper
- Niels Ellefsen Indthior, farmer
- Thore Aanonsen Nedrebøe, farmer
- Romund Terkildsen Dolholt, farmer
- Jørgen Munch Lien, farmer
- Ommund Olsen Thiore, farmer
- Ole Tellefsen Thiore, farmer
- Peter Aanonsen Jamvold, farmer
- Arne Olsen Beisland, farmer
- Mads Nielsen Helleland, farmer
- Jens Olsen Helleland, farmer
- Peder Terkildsen Hougeboe, farmer
- Peder Hansen Hougboe, farmer
- Rasmus Gierulfsen Hunsdal, farmer
- Gunder Aslacksen Tønnesøl, farmer
- Jens Olsen Støle, farmer
- Terkild Prossen Støle, farmer
- Aslack Andersen Nedrebøe, farmer
- Terje Knudsen Stalleland, farmer
- Eivind Salvesen Hørthe, farmer
- Niels Pedersen Igland, farmer
- Hans Jensen Håøe, pilot
- Lars Jølsen Medtved, farmer
- Osul Pedersen Grøsle, farmer
- Tellef Jacobsen Hardeberg, farmer
- Terje Olsen Gureboe, schoolkeeper
- Anders Torjussen Skiftenes, farmer
- Peder Nielsen Storenes, farmer
- Osul Knudsen Kulaasen, crofter
- Ole Christensen Snemyr, crofter and boat-builder
- Berulf Johnsen Hunsdal, farmer
- Lars Jensen Aagre, farmer
- Mads Danielsen Molland, farmer
- Aanon Larsen Lunden, farmer

- Elisabet Torgiusen (Molland)

Later joined:

- Christen Dolholt, farmer
- Niels Torjussen Skiftenes, farmer
- Lars Molland
- Terje Helleland
- Ole Flaa
- Niels Kieland? (Might possibly be Niels Pedersen Igland d.y.)
- Svend Hansen Håøen, pilot

On the surface this membership-list seems to be rather dry and uninteresting, but on closer scrutiny it reveals some characteristics of the parish.

- The names are entered in an order reflecting the hierarchy of Landvik Parish 200 years ago.
- The role of the women is revealed; Elisabeth Molland is the only woman on the list. She comes last, although she was descended from the powerful Friis family, and probably ranked number two or three among the women in the parish.
- More than two-thirds of the members are farmers or peasants. Some of them are doubtfully termed crofters, but all men in this group owned land, or were to become landowners.
- Most of the members are familymen in their prime.
- The geographical distribution is wide, but Øvre Landvik (Upper Landvik) is heavily represented. A survey of books on loan also shows that this part of the parish was a centre of reading skills and interests.

The number of books on loan was limited. The bishop had brought with him 20 books for the foundation, and later the same year another seven books were ordered from Copenhagen. A few copies were received as gifts, but the total number of books never surpassed 33 or 34 titles. Roughly speaking, there was one volume for each active member. Consequently, this was hardly a library, but rather a circle of readers.

The volumes in the collection covered a limited number of topics:

- *General information* (Bishop Hansen about the Public School; Beck: How to Raise Healthy, Clever, and Happy Children; Hasse: Useful reading for the common man...)
- *Religion and ethics* (Evangelical Hymn Book; Godfearing Seamen's Peace of Mind; Hallager: A Book for the Common Man about Witches...)
- *Practical subjects* (Fleicher: The Catechism of Agriculture; Handbook for Mothers; Wise Words for the Christian Farmer...)
- *History and travels* (Villaume: History of Man; Campe: Travels for Children...)
- *Natural science* (Wolf: A Physical Description of Man...)
- *Fiction* (Songs for the Common Man; Life of Tordenskjold; Six Songs from the Battle of the 2nd of April...)³⁰

The society existed for six years, and 290 loans were registered. Only ten members read more than ten books, with Osul Knudsen Kullåsen and Niels Pedersen Igland in the lead with 18 books each.³¹ Most of the most avid readers came from Øvre Landvik, and Johannes Havstad sees this as an indication that people had acquired a taste for reading even before the foundation of the Society. Gjeruldsen Rasmussen Hunsdal was a central man in this part of the parish, and was the owner of a private library containing 300 books.

Two opposing views seemed to co-exist in the rural parish in those days. Officially and politically most peasants found it opportune to go against most grants for public and permanent schools, in fact, they opposed almost any expenditure. At the same time there undoubtedly existed a form of "counter culture" which saw the importance of public enlightenment, enhanced reading interests, and, at least privately, advocated the blessings of education.

Johannes Havstad may be right in assuming that this interest in books and reading is really the basis for the cultural and political awakening which surfaced in Øvre Landvik in the early 1800s.³² A political awakening would in this connection imply both a sceptical attitude towards the high and mighty in society, and a growing attitude of trust thyself. It could quite clearly be seen as a continuation of the ideas represented by Kristian Lofthus, a confirmation of the ideals fought for by Hans Nielsen Hauge, and a foreshadowing of the coming social uprising led by Marcus Thrane.

³⁰ My translation (titles).

³¹ Both men saw family members and relations emigrate to America a few decades later.

³² Johannes Havstad, op. cit.: 339.

Consequently, the advancement of literacy and enlightenment among common people would be instrumental in building independent and self-reliant local communities, where people might stand up straight and be confident with their new learning. The ossified structures of an agrarian society would no longer stand as an unsurmountable hindrance to new developments. On such a basis, the idea of breaking bonds and leaving one's native country would no longer be an absurd notion. In fact, it was backed by local traditions of international contacts which were deep and broad.

The reading society came to an end in 1807, which was not a mere coincidence since this year also marks the beginning of the hardships connected with the war with England. At this time Bishop Peder Hansen had returned to Copenhagen, his successors were not too keen on following his example on the advancement of reading,³³ the general atmosphere soon came to be dominated by problems with the war and the embargo, and many cultural activities were pushed out of people's daily lives.

It would take a rather long time after the war before the Local Council was convinced that a public library was an institution to strive for. The recordings in the Council show that it took the members several rounds before they agreed on an annual sum to buy books for a public library. The first debate came in 1851 (ten "spesiedaler" granted), a new one in 1854 (20 "spesiedaler" granted), and a third one in 1862 (15 "spesiedaler" granted). The council made it a point that the library was meant for the use of local residents only, not for people from the twin parish, Eide.³⁴

6.9 RELIGION

Bishop Jacob Neumann's harsh warning against the follies of emigration must have made its impact on the whole fabric of the State Church. As a general observation this is probably true, but it is at the same time difficult to find proof that his words of admonition had any practical effect locally in Hommedal Parish. This is not to say that the good people in Hommedal Parish were opposed to the church, in fact there is every reason to believe that they were indeed stable and faithful followers of the faith. On the other hand, they were certainly in opposition to most breeds of civil servants, and may have seen a distinction between faith and church organization.

³³ It is probable that the authorities in Copenhagen even were opposed to the advancement of public education in Norway, since that might constitute a threat to the established order.

³⁴ *Forhandlingsprotokol for Formandskabet og Repræsentanterne i Landvigs Sogn, 1838- 66* (Aust-Agder Arkivet/ County Archives, Arendal).

A close reading of existing protocols and recordings from the 1840s³⁵ shows little or no sign of a conflict between the vicar, Claudius Martini, and his parishoners. In fact, the only instance of disagreement and discord in church matters is represented by the prolonged quarrel over the maintenance of the vicarage. There is neither mention of the issue of emigration, nor any kind of dissidents, not even the “Haugeans”. Otherwise, the records from the meetings between the bishop and the locals are characterized by rather everyday concerns about a new cemetery and the upkeep of the church. From a theological point of view, the twin parishes stand forth as staunch representatives of a deeply rooted Protestant faith which definitely was the bedrock of their society.

The vicar seems to have been widely respected, and even Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven signed the protocol after the bishop’s visitations in the period from 1842 to 1844 without comment, and apparently in full accord with the other members of the church council. It is therefore remarkable that the company of 1846 chose to break their bonds, and in discord with clear admonitions from the church, left their native ground in favour of a new life in America.

On the surface, then, there was no open opposition to the established order as represented by the men of the cloth. It is likely that they too were regarded as civil servants, but hardly treated with the same animosity and scepticism that befell certain sheriffs and bailiffs.

It was unthinkable to attack the very foundation of life. Respect and decorum shielded religion, and the establishment of a church in America was a question of organizational freedom rather than opposition to faith itself. Consequently, religious persecution can hardly have been a driving force behind emigration from Hommedal Parish.

Although the “five-year-reports” explicitly stated that there were very few “readers” – i.e. Haugeans – in the parish, it would be wrong to rule out the influence exerted by Hans Nielsen Hauge. Ingrid Semmingsen is probably right in maintaining that there was a religious undertone in the whole movement across the Atlantic. Among emigrants from the West Coast, as well as the South Coast, the inspiration from Hauge played an important part, and may well have made them more receptive to the idea of “a new Canaan”. In any case, people who chose to emigrate had been through a process of liberation, and consequently people from the south-west flocked around lay preachers once they had settled in America. It is also true that *the*

³⁵ Biskop von der Lippe, *Journalsaker, 1842-1845* (C 48) and *1845-1846* (C 49), Statsarkivet i Kristiansand/*State Archives. Visitasberetninger, 1842-1844* (C 48), Statsarkivet i Kristiansand/*State Archives. Journal for Hommedal, 1822-1856* (A-II-3) (*Copie-bog*), Statsarkivet i Kristiansand/*State Archives*.

Norwegian Synod made easier progress among immigrants from *Trøndelag* and East Norway than it did among the south-westerners. For the latter, faith often came to be associated primarily with lay movements and their insistence upon confession of sin and repentance.

*Haugeanism paved the way psychologically for emigration, contributed in liberating people from the old society and enabled them to take the radical decision to emigrate to America around 1840.*³⁶

Although Norway stood forth as a political unit in the early 19th century, with a dominant state Lutheran Church, the peasants continued to practise a variety of social customs of courtship, marriage, fertility, use of alcohol, and dancing. In mountainous districts to the north and east, for example, the custom of “bundling” was held in high esteem; it implied premarital sex, and resulted in an a rather large number of prenuptial conceptions. On the “Dark Coastal Strip” (the South-West), however, such customs were anathema, and their morality was in fact pronounced “good” by Eilert Sundt. The coastal regions with low rates of pre-marriage births tended to become affected by pietistic movements and were regarded as defenders of conservative moral behaviour.³⁷ Such attitudes shaped their community in Norway, and were also brought over to America and helped shape the embryonic settlements in the mid-century.

6.10 SUMMING UP

In searching for the underlying forces behind the beginning flow of emigration in the first half of the 19th century, the macro factors of growth of the population, a new and more liberal economy, and the profound changes within agriculture, affected the local communities along the south-eastern coast in the same manner as the rest of the country. But in addition, there were other forces at work, contributing in breaking down the old order, pointing to new possibilities and opening a window to the future.

The book is a carrier of culture and values. It is an instrument for paving the way of new freedoms and combined with education and new knowledge, it might break down the old ways. Such forces were present in Hommedal Parish in the 1840s, and before that. In the hard aftermath of the war with England, cultural forces struggled their way back in the local communities; it took time to gain momentum, but by the 1840s both reading skills, possession

³⁶ Ingrid Semmingsen. *Drøm og dåd. Utvandring til Amerika* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1975): 34.

³⁷ Jon Gjerde. “Conflict and Community: A Case Study of the Immigrant Church in the United States” *Journal of Social History* 19, 4 (Summer, 1986): 684-686.

of books, and interest in political, religious and cultural matters were vigorously back in the arena, and helped people with dreams of a better life stand up against official voices and decide on a course which required both courage and stamina, self-reliance, and a supportive family-network.

6.11 A REPORT FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL IN LANDVIK

In 1840, 1845, and 1850 the parish councils were asked by the County Governor to supply information about the state of affairs in agriculture and other fields of the economy.³⁸ The information would then become part of the Governor's so-called "five-year-reports".

It has sometimes been asserted that such reports reveal peasants under-reporting their assets and harvests to avoid taxation. In this case also, slight instances of such modest reports are found.

The following observations are taken from the minutes of the Parish Council in Landvik.

The report of 1840³⁹ is short and concise, and it points to a limited number of issues.

- The breaking and cultivation of new land has been insignificant.
- Only a few new tools have been put to use, e.g. some new ploughs.
- The most usual grains and seeds are barley, mixed grain, rye, oats, and potatoes. The ratio grains - potatoes is 1 to 2. Some small quantities of linen and hemp are mentioned. The fruit trees were largely broken down by snow in the hard winter three years earlier.
- Livestock farming is on the decrease; although figures in earlier reports are said to be too low.
- The forests are also diminished; prices are low and production likewise. There is some demand for oak in the ship yards on the coast.
- The importance of fishing is slight; freshwater fish is mostly caught for own consumption.
- There is no iron works in the parish.
- There are no factories, either.
- There are two inns.

³⁸ *Forhandlingsprotokol for Formandskabet og Repræsertantene i Landvig Sogn, 1838-66.*

³⁹ Minutes from meeting, February 24, 1841. Aust-Agder Arkivet/ *County Archives*, Arendal.

- Transportation is difficult, since there are hardly any roads fit for wheels (it is estimated that the total length of roads in the parish is 1¼ “mil”). Necessary transport is done on sledges in the winter, and on packsaddles in other seasons.
- The over-all economic situation is also on the decrease, mostly because of bad times in lumbering, and generally high prices of goods and commodities.
- Wages are as follows: a farmhand may earn 20-30 “spesiedaler” a year, a maid servant may get eight to 12 “spesiedaler” a year. An adult day-worker can expect 36-40 “skillings” a day.

The report from 1845⁴⁰ follows the same pattern.

- Agriculture shows some progress; 300 “mål” of new land has been cultivated.
- The usual grains and seeds are barley, mixed grains, rye, oats, potatoes, and wheat. A small quantity of hemp is also grown. Some new fruittrees have been planted.
- Livestock farming is unprofitable; prices are low and there is a lot of imported competition from Denmark.
- Lumbering is still largely unprofitable; prices on timber are low, and also the production of charcoal for the iron works is in low demand.
- Fishing is only important for personal, not commercial consumption.
- There are no mines or iron works in the parish.
- There are no factories.
- The parish has some craftsmen: blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers, tailors, and boatbuilders.
- The over-all economic situation is very much on the decrease. Two main causes are mentioned: drunkenness and the blight of fees charged by the civil servants. For the first and only time in the decade, the Parish Council links the economic situation to emigration.

[Here is] poverty and recession, and a number of common people talk a lot about going to America, and a good many people are getting ready to emigrate to America this year in the hope of getting a better life.

*Poverty is also caused by the high fees charged by officials, both temporal and clerical.*⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ibid., May 16, 1846.

- There is no granary in the parish.
- No new roads have been built.

The report from 1850⁴² strengthens the impression of a parish in troubled economic waters.

- There is little progress in agriculture.
- The usual grains and seeds are barley, mixed grains, oats, rye, wheat, and potatoes. A little hemp is grown, and some new fruittrees have been planted.
- Livestock farming is still unprofitable: prices on meat are low.
- Lumbering is also unprofitable. It is hard to get paid in cash, and this problem in turn creates difficulties in paying taxes, and paying the workers. There is, however, one bright spot, since the demand for ships timber and materials for boatbuilding is growing. The production of charcoal is unprofitable.
- Fishing is only done for personal, not commercial consumption.
- There are no iron works, or mines, or factories in the parish.
- Some of the women in the parish have bought looms.
- There are all kinds of craftsmen in the parish.
- The over-all economic situation shows signs of recession. One main cause is the lack of operating capital, and in addition the report mentions the difficulties in obtaining loans from the banks, and the obstacles put up by privileges in running the sawmills. Forestry also faces the problem of being forced to take goods and commodities instead of cash in payment for timber.
- Some new grain-mills have been erected, and there are also a few threshing machines at work.
- No new roads have been built.

⁴¹ Minutes dated May 16, 1846. The Parish Council does not go into any details concerning the problem of drunkenness. What they do say, however, is that the system itself enhances high consumption. The reason is simple: it is cheaper to buy alcohol in great quantities, and therefore people cooperate in obtaining the commodity.

In a meeting on July 12, 1843, the Council remarks that "liquor is the source of many ill-deeds". As for the high fees, called "sportler", it was a well-known problem in many parts of the country that representatives of the bureaucracy charged unreasonable sums of money for services rendered. Sheriffs, bailiffs, and priests alike were accused of exploiting the system, filling their pockets at the expense of the common man. My translation.

⁴² Minutes from meeting, December 9, 1850.

The following tables sum up the situation in agricultural production, as well as the situation in livestock farming.⁴³ Table 6.3 repeats the development concerning the growth of the population between 1835 and 1855, tables 6.4 and 6.5 give an estimate of sown and harvested grains and potatoes between 1840 and 1850, and table 6.6 sums up the situation in livestock farming between 1840 and 1850.

Table 6.3:

Growth of the population, Landvik and Eide Parishes, 1835-1855; printed statistics/ census returns:

Census returns	Landvik Parish	Eide Parish	Landvik, in %	Eide, in %
1835	1,690	640	-	-
1845	1,890	652	+11.8 %	+1.9 %
1855	2,027	693	+7.2 %	+6.3 %

Table 6.4:

Yearly agricultural production (yearly sown or planted), figures in "tønder" (1 "tønde" = ca. four bushels), Landvik Parish, 1840-1850, reports to the County Governor:

Year	Rye	Wheat	Mixed grains	Oats	Potatoes
1840	30¾	1	281	139	554½
1845	28	2	300	120	652
1850	30	6	300	130	550

Table 6.5:

Yearly agricultural production (yearly harvested), figures in "tønder" (1 "tønde" = ca. four bushels), Landvik Parish, 1840-1850; reports to the County Governor:

Year	Rye	Wheat	Mixed grains	Oats	Potatoes
1840	130	8	1,465	706½	4,289
1845	140	16	1,500	600	5,216
1850	240	48	1,500	650	4,400

Table 6.6:

Livestock farming, number of animals, Landvik Parish, 1840-1850; reports to the County Governor:

Year	Horses	Cattle	Sheep	Goats	Pigs
1840	139	667	1,334	168	6
1845	160	815	1,467	100	30
1850	160	800	1,450	110	25

⁴³ All figures from the *Forhandlingsprotokol*, (dated 1841, 1846, 1850) (Report to the County Governor).

The picture that emerges on the background of these figures is one of unbalance: both farm produce and the number of domestic animals are inadequate compared to the needs of a swelling population. At best there is a slight bettering of the production, mostly we see a status quo, and at worst there is a real setback, as with the potato harvest which in 1850 dropped considerably, in the main due to a serious attack of potato dry-rot.

The reports rendered to the County Governor represent only one side of the activities of the parish council. The minutes from the meeting are mostly kept in a neutral language, and only between the lines may one detect the heated feelings over issues concerning school, poor relief, church, and financial matters. Meetings were rather few, and sometimes arranged as joint sessions with Eide Parish. This was natural, since the two parishes functioned as one in church matters under the umbrella of a greater parish, named Hommedal.

In a survey of the meetings which took place in the period 1838-1850, a limited number of issues were debated, and could in general terms be put under the same heading: "times are difficult", or, "we cannot afford it".

In 1838, probably to mark the start of a new era in local politics, all the members of the joint council signed the protocol. In the following 12 years, five of these leading men (underlined) would emigrate to America:

Knut T. Omre, Johannes Jensen, A. Svennevig, Ole Larsen Arnevig, Terje Terjesen Stalleland, Peder Nielsen Iglan, Thomas Hardeberg, Peder Jacobsen Nørholm, David Børresen Landvig, Torjus Aadnesen, Knud Andersen Hjønsdal, Knud Hjemdal, Anders Knudsen, Ole T. Githmark, Halvor Omre, Osul Enge, H. Jacobsen, Gjøel Olesen, Ole Jacob ..., Elef Andersen, Gjerul Halvorsen Hørthe, Aanon Pettersen Jamvold, Ole Osuldsen Skiftenes, Ole Terkelsen Torp, Ole Rasmussen, Aanen Olsen Kyland, Gjeruld Rasmussen Hunsdal, Jens Espestøl, C. Arnevig.

In 1840, the Council concluded after a debate over Professor Hjælm's proposal on "religious freedom" that there were only few adherents of Hans Nielsen Hauge in the parish, their number was on the decline, and there were no other "separatists". The council saw no need for a new law regulating such new freedoms.

In 1841, a long struggle began over expenses for the upkeep of the vicarage. The vicar himself, Mr. Martini, was distraught, and the matter came to be known as the "Martini

case”. In short, the Parish Council was not willing to pay these expenses, and argued that it was a state business.

In the same year, the Council supported a vote of non-confidence against the road-master (probably in a hidden move to save money). They also declined a wish to establish a permanent arrangement with a veterinarian (again, to save money). They also refused the bailiff extra money for transportation.

Late in 1841, the joint Council agreed to accept the withdrawal of Herefoss Parish from the greater parish. This agreement left the vicar in Hommedal Parish in control of the two sub-parishes of Landvik and Eide.

The meetings in 1842 saw new rounds in the struggle over the upkeep of the vicarage. The matter was brought to *Høyesterett* (the Supreme Court), and Landvik Parish was in 1844 sentenced to pay the expenses.

In 1843, the Council refused to put up money for a new prison.

Other plans and wishes were also turned down on financial arguments: the establishment of an agricultural academy (“rather in another location”), and the cost of transportation in connection with a program of vaccination.

A new system of salaries for the priests also heightened the temperature in the council: “it is too heavy a burden for the common farmer”.⁴⁴ The Council wanted no changes.

The Council also debated the proposal for a new law on production and sale of liquor. The new law envisaged a stop in private production within ten years, and the Council supported this: “It is the cause of many an illdeed,”⁴⁵ and also wanted a ban on import of liquor.

In 1844, the council refused to give a permanent engagement to a midwife in the parish.

In 1845, a new cemetery was planned at Skiftenes. The argument in favour of this plan was the long distance the corpses had to be moved to get to the parish church.

In 1846, Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven could not be chosen to sit in a committee on assessing fire-damage, since he was planning to emigrate to America. In 1847, he was reported gone to America, and a replacement had to be called. In the continuous economic struggle, the council refused a new poor relief tax, and found a solution in using a little sum of money they had placed in *Grimstad Sparebank* (savings bank).

⁴⁴ My translation.

⁴⁵ My translation.

In 1848, the prolonged struggle over a building for a permanent school came to another standstill. The state yet again refused to give financial support. The Council was in agreement over the possibility of taking a bank loan to finance the school building: the general economic situation was of such a negative kind that the farmers of the parish had been set back many years. Four factors were mentioned: the high prices on grains, the tendency to buy commodities in the towns, the low prices on timber (and the problems of getting paid in cash), and the rising expenses of the poor relief.

In 1849, the Council refused to establish a hospital for patients with cholera.

6.12 A REPORT FROM NEIGHBOURING EIDE PARISH

The report from Eide Parish Council in 1840⁴⁶ is also concise, although one may read between the lines that such reports gave the chairmen of the councils some trouble.

- The Council admits that there are no certain figures concerning cultivation of new land, but the estimate is ca. 20 "tønder".⁴⁷ Some new ploughs have been acquired, but only in a limited number of farms. The most common seeds and grains are oats, barley, mixed grains, rye, summer wheat, and potatoes. The harvest has shown an estimated increase of 5% for grains, and a status quo for potatoes.
- The forests have in large measure been decimated, and there is a lack of wood for fuel. Peat is used for heating and cooking.
- Fishing is only a side income, and the methods used are those of days past.
- There are no mines or factories in the parish.
- There is no trade with crafts products. Ship- and boatbuilding is insignificant. There is one inn in the parish. There is no organized transport on land.
- The over-all economic situation is one of little activity. People have got used to minimizing their expenditures, and live according to meagre means. There is one main road in the parish: ¼ Norwegian mile, and minor local roads: 1 ½ Norwegian mile. There is no shortage of servants; a grown day-worker may earn 16-20 "skilling" pr. day (meals included).
- There are no granaries.

⁴⁶ *Forhandlingsprotokol, Eide Parish, 1837-1874.* Aust-Agder Arkivet, Arendal/ County Archives, reg. no. 44606. Minutes from meeting, January 18, 1841.

⁴⁷ 1 "tønde" land = 3.937 m²

- The general situation in the parish is neither good nor bad. The sources of income are few, fishing shows little profit, seafaring is unprofitable, and logging is insignificant. Agriculture is the only industry which shows some stability.

The report from 1845⁴⁸ states:

- Agriculture has shown some progress, and better methods are gaining ground. There are, however, few new tools and machines, and cultivation of new land is only slight. The common seeds and grains are wheat, rye, barley, oats, mixed grains and potatoes. There are some few examples of the growing of linen and hemp.
- Forestry is on the same level as in 1840; the parish forests have been cut down, and therefore one cannot take advantage of rising prices for lumber.
- Fishing is showing a declining tendency, and only few families are involved in it.
- There are no mines or iron works in the parish.
- There are no factories.
- There are no shipyards; boatbuilding is insignificant. There are no inns. There is some trade with agricultural products in Lillesand and Grimstad.
- The general economic situation is static. The community is not a wealthy one. But people pay their taxes, and there are relatively few bankruptcies and executions of distress. There is, however, a marked lack of capital. The three sources of income are agriculture, fishing, and seafaring. None of them are profitable.

Some people have found the situation so depressing, that they have decided to emigrate to America. One of those peasants has sold his farm to that purpose.

*People do not use excessive quantities of alcohol. ... Quite many people are engaged in reading.*⁴⁹

- There are no granaries.
- No new roads have been built.

In the report from 1850, there are some few signs of better times:

- There is progress in agriculture: new seeds and grains are used, there is variation in the use of the soil, a lot of ditches have been dug, there is a spreading use of fertilizers (including seaweed). Some new tools have been put to use. The common grains and

⁴⁸ Minutes from meeting, February 28, 1846.

⁴⁹ My translation.

seeds are: wheat, rye, barley, oats, mixed grains, and potatoes. The major obstacle on the road to an improved situation in agriculture is the lack of capital.

- Livestock farming is on the same level as before.
- Forestry is insignificant with some minor exports of lumber to Denmark. There is still a lack of firewood in the parish.
- Fishing is showing good tendencies: mackerel is abundant, and prices for export lobster to England are satisfactory, at four “skilling” a piece.
- There are no mines or iron works.
- There are no factories.
- The general situation is one of inactivity. The use of alcohol is on the decrease.

People are still tempted to emigrate to America, and the reason for this is the same, namely the dark prospects of finding a livelihood, combined with the burdens created by the poor relief, road- and transport obligations etc.⁵⁰

- There are no granaries.
- There are no new roads.

Accurate information about the exact quantities of agricultural production is scanty, in fact only figures for 1845⁵¹ are recorded. In the period in question, 1840-1850, the population in Eide parish also went through a process of growth, though less dramatic than in neighbouring parishes: a 1.9% increase in 1845, and a 6.3% increase in 1850. All the same, we see yet another instance of a demographic development which puts increased demands on the ability of a local community to procure sustenance for its inhabitants.

Table 6.7:

Agricultural production (yearly sown), figures in “tønder”, Eide Parish, 1845; report to the County Governor:

Year	Wheat	Rye	Barley	Mixed grains	Oats	Potatoes
1845	5 $\frac{1}{3}$	5 $\frac{1}{3}$	56 $\frac{1}{4}$	61 $\frac{7}{8}$	20 $\frac{1}{2}$	243 $\frac{1}{2}$

1 “tønde” = ca. four bushels

⁵⁰ My translation.

⁵¹ *Forhandlingsprotokol, 1845* (Report to the County Governor).

Table 6.8:

Agricultural production (yearly harvested), figures in “tønder”, Eide Parish, 1845; figures based upon a “normal” harvest:

Year	Wheat	Rye	Barley	Mixed grains	Oats	Potatoes
1845	64	53	337 ½	366	123	1,948

Table 6.9:

Livestock farming, number of animals, Eide Parish, 1845; report to the County Governor:

Year	Horses	Cattle	Sheep	Goats
1845	31	264	366	38

In their own meetings, the council in Eide Parish debated much the same issues as their colleagues in neighbouring Landvik, showed the same inclinations, and came to similar conclusions.

In 1840, the council reported that there were no “separatists” in the parish, and in 1843, they refused to put up money for a new prison. The Council also worded strong reactions against the abuse of liquor; it is the cause of many unexpected expenses.

In the years 1845-46, Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven is elected to sit on various committees, but finally he is unavailable because he is planning to move to America.

In 1847, the council was forced to apply for a state loan of 200 “spesiedaler” to be able to purchase vital seed grains for its inhabitants. The minutes of the meeting of May 25 show a deep concern that many of the farmers were unable to buy such grains. It was therefore decided that farmers might apply for seed grains from the Parish Council. In the first round, eight farmers applied for such support, and later in the same year more followed, among these were Terje Nilsen Enge and Christoffer Nilsen Eide.

It is a curious fact that maritime activities are hardly mentioned in the proceedings in the councils, neither in Landvik Parish, nor in Eide Parish. The Census Returns in 1845 show, however, that as many as 119 persons were engaged in seafaring in that particular year.⁵² Consequently, such activities must have played an increasingly important role in family economics as the international markets picked up momentum around 1850, and gave people on the coastline a more varied economic basis.

⁵² Census Returns, 1845; Landvik and Eide Parishes (Hommedal Parish), Statsarkivet/ State Archives Kristiansand.

6.13 CENSUS RETURNS, 1845: OCCUPATIONS

In 1801 occupations connected with farming were dominant, also in Nedenes County. Calculated from the 1801 Census Returns, Michael Drake has shown that 41.8% of all the men in the county were classified as farmers, and another 10% were registered as crofters with land.⁵³ In the same survey, fishermen/ seamen are represented with 8.4%, servants 8.4%, and day labourers 7.7%.

By 1845, the general balance in the picture had shifted, underscoring the fact that farming was becoming less important, also in parishes along the southern coastline.

The following table shows the distribution of occupations in the two parishes of Landvik and Eide in 1845.

Table 6.10:

Distribution of occupations, Landvik and Eide Parishes; main persons; Census Returns, 1845:

Occupation	Eide Parish	Landvik Parish	Sum
Landowning farmers	66	203	269
Tenant farmers	6	7	13
Crofters, without land	21	16	37
Crofters, with land	15	97	112
Retired people, living on their former property	12	29	41
Pensioners	7	0	7
Merchants	0	2	2
Clerks	0	0	0
Students	0	0	0
Craftsmen	13	7	20
Ship's masters	12	4	16
Seamen	62	39	101
Pilots	9	7	16
Fishermen	3	4	7
Workers, iron works	0	0	0
Day workers	6	68	74
Servants	59	225	284
Miscellaneous	105	307	412

⁵³ Drake, op. cit.: 210 – 211.

Table 6.11:

Distribution of occupations, main persons, in % of total number of men in the parish; Landvik and Eide Parishes; Census Returns, 1845:

Occupation	Landvik Parish	Eide Parish
Landowning farmers	21.4	19.8
Tenant farmers	0.7	1.8
Crofters, without land	1.7	6.3
Crofters, with land	10.2	4.5
Retired people, living on their former property	3.1	3.6
Pensioners	0	2.1
Merchants	0.2	0
Clerks	0	0
Students	0	0
Craftsmen	0.7	3.9
Ship's masters	0.4	3.6
Seamen	4.1	18.6
Pilots	0.7	2.7
Fishermen	0.4	0.9
Workers, on iron works	0	0
Day workers	7.2	1.8
Servants	23.7	17.7
Miscellaneous	32.3	31.5

(Total exceeds 100% because some inhabitants are listed with more than one occupation).

Although the above survey is based upon the total number of men in the parishes, whereas Drake limits his sample to the age-group 21-50, it becomes clear that the shift in occupations up to 1845 had been dramatic.

In Drake's material the total number of men involved in farming (farmers, crofters with and without land) is 58.6%; in the two parishes of Landvik and Eide, the equivalent figures from 1845 show 34.0% and 32.4% respectively.

Dealing with the figures related to maritime activities, it becomes evident that the two parishes are to a certain extent of different kinds: Eide Parish (because of its location on the coastline), is far more dependent upon the occupations of seamen, fishermen and pilots (25.8%), than neighbouring and mainly inland Landvik (5.6%). Drake's 14.5% lands in between, and must reflect the good times in seafaring in the county around the turn of the century.

Other striking features in the 1845 Census Returns are the high, and rising, number of servants, the high number of people listed under "miscellaneous", and the near total lack of merchants, clerks, students, and workers in the iron-works.

Helge Ove Tveiten has collected comparable data from Tromøy Parish and Holt Parish, both to the east in Nedenes Fogderi.⁵⁴ These two parishes are of the same kind, in the sense that Holt Parish is an inland parish, with some ties to seafaring activities, while Tromøy Parish on the other hand is almost wholly dependent upon such activities, even more than Eide Parish.

In comparing the figures from the four parishes, many features appear similar. The importance of farming is fairly much the same, with the exception of Tromøy Parish with a mere 24.6%. In the matter of seafaring activities, however, the balance shifts, and Holt Parish is very much equal to Landvik Parish, while Tromøy Parish surpasses Eide Parish and lands at 30.8%.

The two eastern parishes are located close to important iron-works, and it is therefore not surprising that as many as 12.9% of the men in Holt Parish are employed there.

Table 6.12:

Distribution of selected occupations, main persons, in % of total number of men, Tromøy and Holt Parishes; Census Returns, 1845:

Occupation	Tromøy	Holt
Landowning farmers	13.0	15.2
Tenant farmers	0.5	1.8
Crofters with land	3.1	9.0
Crofters without land	17.6 (incl. day workers)	4.1
Day workers	-	4.5
Retired people, living on their former farm	3.3	6.5
Craftsmen	6.7	3.7
Seamen	30.8	7.3
Workers, on iron works	3.0	12.9
Servants	18.6	28.4
Pensioners	0.2	3.8
Clerks	-	0.5

6.14 AGE-GROUPS

The Census Returns of 1845 also give the age of the inhabitants. Age is recorded for 14 different groups, from under one to over 100 years of age. In analyzing the material, it becomes clear that the distribution of age groups bears many of the characteristics of a new

⁵⁴ Helge Ove Tveiten, op. cit.: 51, 58.

and perhaps developing nation. The most numerous groups are those between 10 and 20, and 20 and 30 years of age. In general terms, there are many young people, and almost none older than 80 years.

The twin parishes show almost identical characteristics, perhaps with the exception that Landvik Parish has an ever clearer “young” image, particularly as regards children younger than ten years.

Two features of these two communities are important:

- There are many children and young people; in the relatively near future they will be building lives on their own, requiring sustenance and work for themselves and their families.
- In 10-20 years, many of these youngsters will reach a reproductive age, and thereby boost the tendency of a rapidly growing population.

The following graphic illustration of the population “pyramid”, repeats the characteristics of a young nation, where nutrition and better health have brought about a pattern which is heavy and “sagging” near the bottom, and which will almost automatically entail increasing problems of sufficient food supplies and possibilities for work in the near future.

Table 6.13:

Distribution of age groups, number of males/ females, Eide and Landvik Parishes; Census Returns, 1845.⁵⁵

	-1	1-3	3-5	5-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	90-100	+
Eide	6/7	14/6	14/11	32/26	67/61	70/59	33/36	35/41	25/34	21/26	14/10	2/2	-	-
Sum	13	20	25	58	128	129	69	76	59	47	24	4	-	-
Land-Vik	30/37	47/47	45/56	100/108	182/181	157/159	121/131	94/89	81/74	51/30	29/33	7/1	-	-
Sum	67	94	101	208	363	316	252	183	155	81	62	8	-	-

Table 6.14:

Distribution of age groups, % of total population, Eide and Landvik Parishes; Census Returns, 1845:

Parish	-1	1-3	3-5	5-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	90-100	+
Eide	1.9	2.9	5.3	8.8	19.3	19.6	10.5	11.5	8.9	7.1	3.7	0.6	0.0	0.0
Land.	3.5	4.9	5.3	11.0	19.5	16.8	13.5	9.9	8.2	3.8	3.3	0.4	0.0	0.0

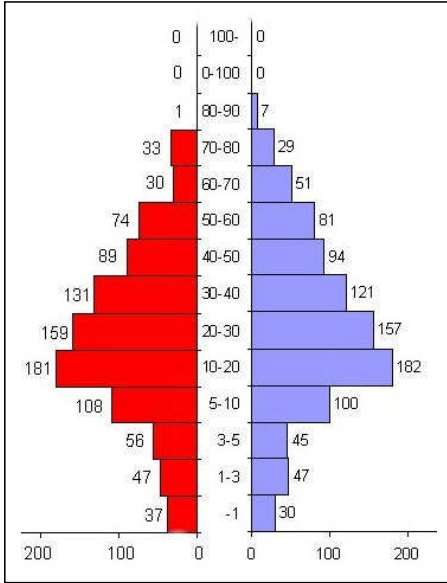
⁵⁵ Census Returns, 1845; manuscript lists, Statsarkivet i Kristiansand/ *State Archives*.

Figure:

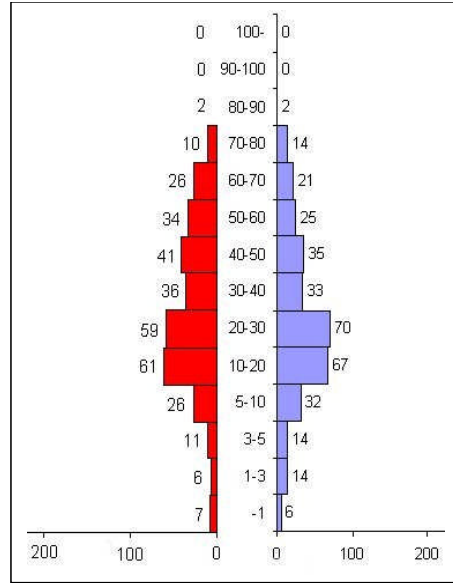
Distribution of age groups, graphic representation

Landvik and Eide Parishes, Census Returns, 1845; red=females, blue=males:

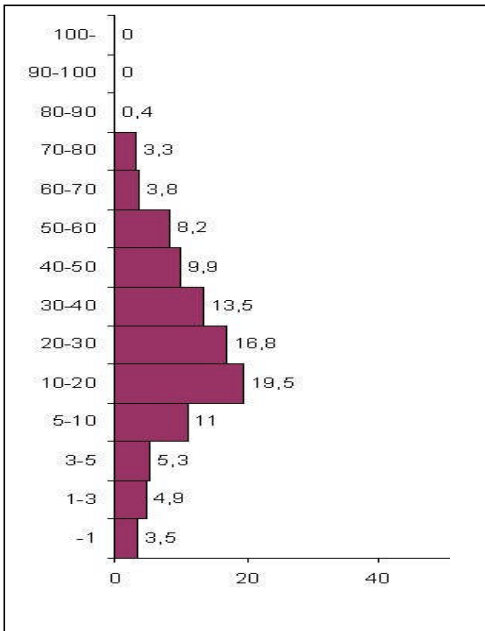
Numerical distribution; Landvik Parish:



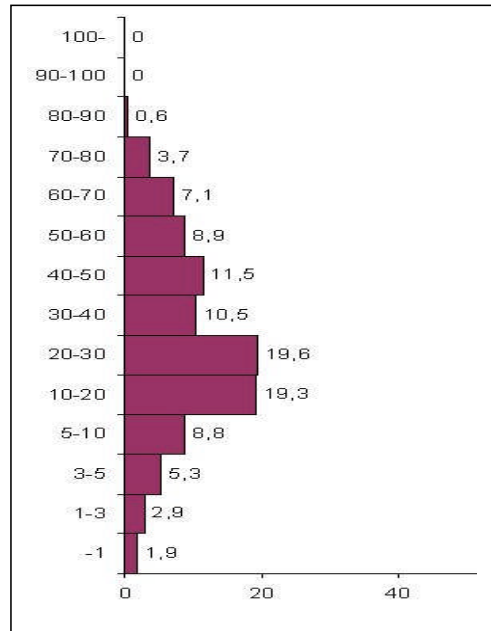
Numerical distribution; Eide Parish:



In % of total population; Landvik Parish:



In % of total population; Eide Parish:



6.15 FARM PRODUCTION

The preceding parts have shown that Landvik and Eide Parishes saw a strong increase in their populations from about 1820. To put it bluntly, the situation asked for an increased food production to keep pace with a growing number of mouths to feed. A vital question is therefore whether the two parishes succeeded in bringing about sufficient food supplies, mainly through self-production, but also supplemented by other sources, e.g. import of grains.

The following tables aim at bringing together statistical features from the census returns, and give an estimate of agricultural production and livestock production, in the final analysis broken down to produce per capita.

Table 6.15:

Agricultural production, sown grains and potatoes/ harvest, figures in "tønder", Eide Parish; Census Returns, 1845.⁵⁶

	Wheat	Rye	Barley	Mixed grains	Oats	Peas	Potatoes
Sown	5 ½	5 ⅓	56 ¼	62	20 ½	0	245 ½
Harvested	66	53	337	370	124	0	1,964

1 "tønde" = ca. four bushels = ca. 144 litres

Table 6.16:

Livestock farming, number of animals, Eide Parish; Census Returns, 1845:

Horses	Cattle	Sheep	Goats	Pigs
31	264	366	21	17

⁵⁶ Agricultural produce differed from district to district. The following table gives a comparison between Landvik, Eide, and two parishes used by Tveiten: Froland and Tromøy; harvest in fold of sown grains/ potatoes:

	Landvik Parish	Eide Parish	Froland/ Tromøy Parishes
Wheat	10	12	7
Rye	8	10	7.5
Barley	6	6	7
Mixed grains	6	6	7
Oats	6	6	7.5
Potatoes	8	8	8

Table 6.17:

Agricultural production per capita, sown grains and potatoes; transferred into "equivalent value of barley", figures in "tønder"; Eide Parish; Census Returns, 1845.⁵⁷

Parish	Harvest of grains/potatoes; "value of barley"	Produce per capita ("tønde")
Eide	1,460	2.2

Table 6.18:

Livestock production per capita; transferred into "equivalent value of cattle"; Eide Parish; Census Returns, 1845.⁵⁸

Parish	Livestock; "value of cattle"	Comparative number of animals per capita
Eide	399	0.6

The general picture that emerges in the case of Eide Parish is that the parish was in no way self-sufficient with food supplies. To fulfill such a goal, the yearly agricultural production should perhaps come close to four "tønder" ("equivalents of barley") per inhabitant and near three animals ("equivalents of cattle") per inhabitant. The respective figures are only 2.2 and 0.6.

In other words, to secure its people adequate food supplies, Eide Parish relied heavily on other ways of income (alternative occupations), and opportunities to buy imported food.

Table 6.19:

Agricultural production, sown grains and potatoes/ harvest, figures in "tønder", Landvik Parish; Census Returns, 1845:

	Wheat	Rye	Barley	Mixed grains	Oats	Peas	Potatoes
Sown	13 ½	23	205	103 ¼	118 ¼	0	701 ½
Harvested	135	184	1,230	619 ½	709 ½	0	5,612

1 "tønde" = ca. four bushels

Table 6.20:

Livestock farming, number of animals, Landvik Parish; Census Returns, 1845:

Horses	Cattle	Sheep	Goats	Pigs
128	855	1,874	164	120

⁵⁷ On the formula: 1 "tønde" barley = 3 td. potatoes = 2 td. oats = 1 ½ td. mixed grains = ¾ td. wheat/ rye. Tveiten, op. cit.: 49.

⁵⁸ On the formula: 1 cow/ox = ½ horse = 6 sheep/ goats = 2 pigs. Tveiten, op. cit.: 50.

Table 6.21:

Agricultural production per capita; harvested grains and potatoes; transferred into “equivalent value of barley”; figures in “tønder”; Landvik Parish; Census Returns, 1845:

Parish	Harvest of grain/ potatoes; “value of barley”	Produce per capita (“tønde”)
Landvik	4,294	2.3

Table 6.22:

Livestock production per capita; transferred into “equivalent value of cattle”; Landvik Parish; Census Returns, 1845:

Parish	Livestock; “equivalent value of cattle”	Comparative number of animals per capita
Landvik	1,510	0.8

Landvik Parish is seen as a little better off than neighbouring Eide Parish. The equivalent figures for agricultural produce and livestock farming are 2.3 and 0.8; in either case, personal food production was insufficient, and only by seeking other sources of income, could the supply of food be secured.

For people in Eide Parish, the natural solution was to turn their eyes towards the sea, and exploit occupations and activities of a maritime character: seamen and pilots. For people in Landvik Parish, this solution was as yet not as obvious; until the heyday of the tall ships, forestry was a more likely, though not very profitable, alternative.

As mentioned earlier, the Parish Council in Eide was reluctant – or unable – to furnish the County Governor with a survey of agricultural produce and livestock farming in 1840, 1845, and 1850. The following comparison is therefore only based on material from Landvik Parish.

The farmers of the 19th century have often been accused of under-reporting their own produce for reasons of taxation. In comparing the figures available for Landvik Parish in the period 1840 to 1850, it becomes clear this is probably the case, also in this particular parish. On the basis of the formula of transferring agricultural produce into a comparative value of barley, the total produce per capita in the parish in 1840, 1845, and 1850, was 1.8, 1.9, and 1.8 respectively, according to the “five-year-reports”. In the more trustworthy figures in the Census Returns from 1845, the figure is 2.3. Assuming that the Parish Council was equally modest in its stipulations in all three years, it becomes clear that Landvik Parish saw a slight increase in its agricultural produce from 1840 to 1845, and a similar negative development in the next five years. In the latter period the harvest of potatoes slumped from 5,216 to 4,400

“tønder”, while various grains were relatively stable. The explanation lies ready at hand: the potato dry-rot struck the county in the second part of the 1840s.

As for livestock farming in the same period, the figures from the Census Returns in 1845 concur fairly well with estimates presented to the County Governor. The development is parallel to that of agricultural produce, a slight increase from 1840 to 1845 (0.6 to 0.8), then followed by a decrease from 1845 to 1850 (0.8 to 0.7).

6.16 A COMPARISON WITH OTHER PARISHES: FROLAND AND TROMØY PARISHES

In his thesis on emigration from Nedenes County, Helge Ove Tveiten has used material from Froland Parish and Tromøy Parish to establish estimates on agricultural produce per capita and livestock farming, seen as the number of comparative animals per capita. Froland Parish is basically an inland community, whereas Tromøy Parish is definitely a coastal community (an island).

Based on the comparative value of barley, each inhabitant in Froland Parish had at his disposal 2.0 “tønder” in 1835. By 1865, the figure had grown to 2.6. In Tveiten’s view, this was largely due to an increased emphasis on potatoes. Generally speaking, the parish was not self-sufficient with grains, and a major part of its grainproduction probably was used for animal fodder. At least in periods, people near the coast had access to cheap Danish grains in the port in Arendal.⁵⁹

In the case of livestock farming, it was at its height around 1855. Seen as “value of cattle per capita”, it was close to 1 in 1855, slightly lower in the preceding decades. An inland parish like Dovre (to the north), would show far higher figures. From 1835 to 1855 they vary between 2.5 and 1.4. This is reasonable, since this was a district on the whole more dependent upon livestock farming.⁶⁰

Tromøy Parish had a much different social structure. Industries connected to the sea played an important role, and both agriculture and livestock farming were more secondary than primary sources of income. As such, the parish showed the traditional characteristics of a diversified coastal community, relying on several economic activities.

⁵⁹ Tveiten, *op. cit.*: 49-50.

⁶⁰ Arnfinn Engen. *Oppbrot og omlegging* (Major thesis, University of Oslo, 1973): 23.

Consequently, the importance of agriculture was less than in Froland Parish. Resorting to the “value of barley”, Tveiten puts the produce at 1,1 per capita in 1855. Going back to 1835, the figure was even less, 0,8. This meant that Tromøy Parish itself only covered about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the local demand for grains and potatoes.⁶¹

Livestock farming was also relatively unimportant in Tromøy Parish. In 1845, the figure per capita was 0,6, and the growth was rather minimal up to 1855, when a decrease set in.⁶²

The four parishes in question here group themselves readily in inland or coastal communities, although Landvik undoubtedly show characteristics of a coastal parish because of its access to the Skagerrak.

As far as agricultural produce is concerned, these parishes are on an equal footing, with the exception of Tromøy which falls below the standard set by the other three parishes. The average produce per capita in 1845 is between 2.2 and 2.3 for Landvik, Eide, and Froland, whereas Tromøy lands at 1.0. In any case, this means that none of these communities were self-sufficient; to reach such a goal they would probably have to get as high as 3.5 to 4.0. They were dependent upon other sources, and in relation to food, import of cheap grains from Denmark must have been a major contributor.

Livestock farming was not capable of balancing this “deficit” in food production. On a local level such farming was relatively unimportant, with average figures per capita varying between 0.6 and 0.9; on the basis of examples from other parts of the country, one could tentatively suggest that to achieve a level of self-sufficiency, the figure should reach perhaps 3.0. But then, very few communities relied solely on livestock production to secure a livelihood.

Since there are no reports about hunger or starvation in the parishes of Nedenes County in these years, the vital question remains: what other sources of income might people in Landvik and Eide Parishes resort to in their struggle to secure the daily bread for growing families?

From the “five-year-reports” we know that there were no factories in the twin parishes in the 1840s. The iron works in Froland and Holt did not play a role in offering work for

⁶¹ Tveiten, *op. cit.*: 56.

⁶² *Ibid.*: 56-57.

people from Landvik and Eide, although some farmers supplied the works with charcoal in certain periods. It seems that fishing only played a minor part on the coast, and was mostly seen as a subsidiary activity within families, and that the sale of lobster to England only took place in rather restricted areas. On the other hand, both fishing and hunting must have given many families welcome contributions in their diets, although such activities remained seasonal and “private”.

In the last analysis, it seems that mainly forestry and shipping activities remained for people in Landvik and Eide Parishes to supplement a too lean, though basic income from farming and livestock farming, while fishing played a minor part in the period from the war until the 1850s.

6.17 A FURTHER COMPARISON: DOVRE AND TINN PARISHES

Originating in the history department at the University of Oslo, two dissertations published in the 1970s shed light on the economic and social situation in two parishes to the north of Nedenes County: Dovre Parish in Sør-Trøndelag County and Tinn Parish in Telemark County.⁶³

In many ways both Arnfinn Engen and Andres A. Svalestuen describe similar and parallel situations in the first half of the 19th century, though of course geography and climate gave, and still gives, the two locations their unique stamp. In a general perspective, both parishes saw the same demographic development, that is to say a marked increase in the population from about 1825, and also the ensuing strife to stretch resources to make ends meet. Just as in Landvik Parish, some farms were prone to early frosts, and the availability of tillable soil was limited. Broken down to farm produce per capita, the following table sums up the situation in selected years.

⁶³ Arnfinn Engen. *Oppbrot og omlegging: Utvandring og økonomisk utvikling i Dovre på 1800-talet* (Major thesis, University of Oslo, 1973); Andres A. Svalestuen. *Tinns emigrasjonshistorie 1837-1907: En undersøkelse med særlig vekt på den demografiske, økonomiske og sosiale bakgrunnen for Amerikafarten, og en statistisk analyse av selve utvandringen* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1972).

Table 6.23:
*Agricultural produce and livestock production; per capita; Dovre and Tinn Parishes.*⁶⁴

Agricultural produce, "value of barley"/ livestock production, "value of cattle"	Year	Dovre Parish	Tinn Parish
"Barley"	1835	1.7	1.8
"Cattle"	1835	1.4	1.0
"Barley"	1845	2.4	-
"Cattle"	1845	2.3	-
"Barley"	1855	3.8	-
"Cattle"	1855	2.5	-
"Barley"	1865	-	2.4
"Cattle"	1865	-	1.4

Although the statistical material is spread over some years, the general trend seems to be the same in all parishes: up till about 1865, there was a slow but steady progress in both agricultural and livestock production. Dovre Parish represents an exception with the figure 3.8 in 1855. This relatively positive development was, however, not enough to balance the scales, it was outweighed by the rapidly growing population. The harvest of grains was too small, and all four parishes had to resort to "import"; as for livestock production, Dovre Parish relied quite heavily on the small, but important profit made on livestock breeding.⁶⁵

6.18 FISHING

Until the middle of the 19th century, the development of Norwegian fishing industries in the main moved along traditional paths.⁶⁶ Fishing was primarily done in open boats along the coast, in the fjords, and in the archipelago, mostly with fishlines, nets, and landbased seines.

The resulting catches had generally been the same throughout the centuries.⁶⁷ However, from about 1850, a series of innovations were put to use: new equipment, boats, products, and other ways of organizing work. This is of course another side of the thorough economic and social changes within all walks of society, often called the emergence of modern Norway. In fishing, as well as agriculture and industry, the metamorphosis implied a

⁶⁴ Engen, op. cit.: 23; Svaldestuen, op. cit.: 68.

⁶⁵ Engen, op. cit.: 22.

⁶⁶ Fritz Hodne. *Norges økonomiske historie 1815-1970* (Oslo: Cappelen, 1981): 112.

⁶⁷ Francis Sejersted. *Den vanskelige frihet 1814-1851*. Mykland, ed. *Norges historie, 10*, (Oslo: Cappelen, 1978): 152.

transfer from fairly simple and basic activities aimed for your own consumption, combining for instance farming and fishing, into more specialized and capital intensive and eventually industrialized ways of production.

One of the first and most marked indications of the new era in fishing is represented by the development of the fishing of mackerel on the Skagerrak-coastline. In the second part of the 19th century, these catches evolved into the country's first systematic open-sea fisheries.⁶⁸ The development of the mackerel fisheries, based on the southern coastline, illustrates a movement from local, well-known waters into open sea. The local catches of mackerel in the fjords had for a long time been important as a contribution to food supplies, but without any similar significance as a source of export income. It is only from about 1860 that these fisheries take the form of widely export-oriented coastal fisheries.⁶⁹

The fishing for mackerel is known as early as 1200, particularly in the county of Vest-Agder. In the centuries that followed, the old ways and methods of fishing virtually never changed, in reality all the way up to about 1830. The general picture was one of fishing for your own consumption, literally done in waters close to your own back yard. In the war years from 1807-1814 it constituted a welcome help to fight off hunger, and ironically, in days of shortage, the mackerel for a period became rich peoples' sustenance.

When the drift-nets were introduced around 1830, a new phase in these fisheries came about. With this new invention, there was also a shift in geography: fishing for mackerel was pushed towards the west, making towns like Farsund and Haugesund important centres for fishing industries. At the same time, eastern districts like Nedenes County, were very much left with the old order.⁷⁰

The changes in fisheries around the middle of the century pushed activities into western areas, making Lindesnes a divide. To the east, fishing for mackerel and other species, remained a local and family-oriented activity, which supplied people along the coast with valuable supplements in their diets. In Nedenes County, forestry, lumber export and shipping industries supplied cash incomes for the population, whereas agriculture and livestock farming remained the backbone in the local economies.⁷¹ It is therefore not surprising that few

⁶⁸ Hodne, op. cit.: 117.

⁶⁹ Trygve Solhaug. *De norske fiskerienes historie 1815- 1880, I- II, II*: 505.

⁷⁰ Harald Olsen. "Makrellfiskets utvikling på den norske Skagerrak-kysten på 1880- tallet" *Kattegat-Skagerrak-prosjektet* 6 (1984): 93.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*: 109.

people were registered as fishermen in the census records: in 1845 only three and four persons in Landvik and Eide Parishes respectively. The reports from the parish councils also confirm this view. Fishing is either on the decline or insignificant; it is only in 1850 that a more positive attitude shines through, when the mackerel are abundant and catches are good.

H.W. Dannevig is of the same opinion, and also puts a dividing line ca. 1850. Around 1860 quite a number of fishermen from Eide and Landvik came with their catches to Grimstad, and evidently established a trade which was a welcome source of income for their families.⁷² Before that time, however, fishing remained a family activity, based upon seasonal and rather incidental catches of mackerel, and also cod and saithe.

The catching of lobster has a special place among the fisheries on the southern coast. Originally not a standard item on local diets, the lobster became a sought-after export product, and large quantities were shipped on special boats to England. This was an important trade in communities to the west of Grimstad, but it is unclear if it played any significant economic role in Landvik and Eide Parishes. The catching of lobster is not mentioned at all when regarding Landvik Parish, while in the case of Eide Parish, the report to the County Governor in 1850 states that the trade with lobster is good, and that the price is four "skilling" a piece. The quantities exported are unknown.

There are, however, national recordings which show the amount of lobster exported in the period from 1815-1915. Before that period, the Dutch had shown a keen interest in the catches, and bought considerable numbers from local fishermen in areas west of Lillesand, that is present-day Vest-Agder.⁷³

On a national scale, the catching of lobster got so popular that the animal became an endangered species, and fairly strict measures of preservation were introduced from 1849 onwards. The number of lobster caught yearly in the period 1816-20 was 620,000; it rose to 1,058,000 between 1821 and 1825, and reached its climax in 1826-30 with 1,300,000. In the next five years, the quantity sank drastically to 700,000 a year, and slumped to a minimum of 524,000 between 1846 and 1850.⁷⁴

For the period 1840-50, it therefore seems fairly certain that the catching of lobster must have shown the same signs of downturn in Nedenes County, as it did nationwide.

⁷² H.W. Dannevig. *Fiske- og redskapsutviklingen på Sørlandet* (Arendal: Aust-Agder Arv, 1975).

⁷³ Dannevig, op. cit.: 77.

⁷⁴ Ibid.: 78.

6.19 FORESTRY

The County Governor's "five-year-reports" have been used earlier, and also as regards forestry they constitute a valuable source of information at a time when official and trustworthy statistics were scarce.

Starting in the period 1825-1830 the report states that for many people in the county forestry is "an important source of income, but is very much on the decline, as the prices on lumber are so low that the forests are cut down with no other advantage than to lighten the need of the moment".⁷⁵ Put differently, the peasants were forced to chop down their forests to be able to pay their taxes and buy grains. In those days, timber was almost the only article which gave cash payment.

There were many privileged and unprivileged sawmills in the region, but the report maintains that "it is more advantageous for the owners of the forests, as long as the prices are so low, to concentrate on the burning of charcoal in the mining districts, since this activity takes place in seasons when the peasant has little work, and only trees not fit for other use are cut down".⁷⁶

By 1840, however, there are slight traces of a new optimism in the reports. There seems, however, to have been a difference between western and eastern districts. In general, the parishes around the river Otra experienced a steady rise in prices on timber, whereas the parishes around Nidelva were slow in seeing a development for the better. Mostly, this was the result of a cumbersome and badly developed means of transportation or floating, combined with low demands for timber. In the case of Nedenes Fogderi, forestry was not very profitable until after 1845.⁷⁷ By that time the shipbuilding industry had shown the initial signs of a widespread and lucrative growth.

In her material on saw-mills in Landvik Parish, Anne Møretro has recorded 61 sawmills which have been in use at different times.⁷⁸ Even as far back as the 1500s, there were several active sawmills, most of them situated on or near the two main rivers, Uråna and Bjørkos. The saw-mill at Gurebo is probably the oldest one, with considerable business done between 1500 and 1700. As with other saw-mills, it was at the mercy of changing business

⁷⁵ The County Governor's Report, 1825-1830. My translation.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Andreas Vevstad. *Skogen i Aust-Agder* (Arendal: Aust-Agder Skogselskap, 1995): 74.

⁷⁸ Anne Møretro. "Sagbruk i Landvik" Knut Storerud, ed. *Skog og skogbrukshistorie i Landvik; - med sol over skogkledde lier* (Tvedestrand: Landvik Historielag, 2003): 74-125.

cycles, saw little activity in the first decades of the 19th century, but returned strongly around 1850 with the growing demand for boards in the shipyards.⁷⁹

Saw-mill privileges were introduced in Norway in 1668, officially to protect the forests. Such privileges were abandoned in 1860, but only after a long period of strife and conflict. In essence, this was a conflict between the rural areas and the small coastal towns which held tight on privileges granted them by the King. The result was that merchants in those little towns enjoyed a near monopoly on the trade with timber, and many farmers complained that they were barred from cutting timber in their own forests. In 1818 they were allowed to cut such timber, but not for export, only for local use.⁸⁰

Many of the persons who later became involved in emigration, or who appear in important incidents in the parish from about 1800, had interests in local sawmills. Some of them enjoyed royal privileges, and were allowed to export timber. Thomas Fasting was one of those, and was granted the right to cut 600 planks yearly in his two saw-mills.⁸¹ Simon Kolaasen had interests in two saw-mills at Hellenen and Askedal before he emigrated to America in 1849, Niels Pedersen Igland worked with his three mills at Kolle, Metveit, and Gryde, Peder Nilsen Igland lent a hand at his own mill at Igland, and people at the Steinsvand farm used their own mill before going to America in 1846.⁸²

In recordings done by the county bailiff in 1850, it is stated that there were 28 saw-mills running in Landvik Parish, and that 64 men were employed in those mills. The total production of boards in the parish in that year was 7,560.⁸³

Only a few years earlier, the tide had not yet turned, and the local rural council was reluctant to let people from the neighbouring town get access to the saw-mill industry. A merchant named Ole Olsen in Grimstad had bought water rights and sawmill interests in 1842, and applied to the council to exploit those rights. The council rejected his application in 1843:

⁷⁹ Ibid.: 82.

⁸⁰ Ibid.: 78.

⁸¹ Ibid.: 111.

⁸² Ibid.: 102.

⁸³ Ibid.: 124.

*Mr. Olsen's application to produce lumber at "Bjørkås Saug", and the licence to export by ship such lumber, is rejected as there are only a couple of farms in the district which still have forests of any significance.*⁸⁴

For centuries the burning of charcoal had been linked to obligations imposed by the iron-works. In 1772 there were 63 farms in Landvik Parish which were part of the "circumference" of the neighbouring *Froland Verk*. These farms were obliged to deliver charcoal; if they failed to do so, they might be fined 24 "skilling" per "lest"⁸⁵ of undelivered coal.⁸⁶ To produce such quantities of charcoal, one needed 4,710 m³ of timber per year. Kristian Hørte has demonstrated in an article that this sooty activity required 75 seasonal workers to fulfil such a production.⁸⁷

There is, however, little reason to believe that the burning of charcoal in the first half of the 19th century represented any discernible difference in income. It remained a burdensome obligation, and those who burnt charcoal were not allowed to deliver to any other parties than the iron-works. In other words, there was no competition, and the producers reaped no rewards from changing business cycles. Burning charcoal was hard work, and the pay was just a day's petty wage. "It is common knowledge that the burning of charcoal in any case pays badly compared to all other lumbering activities".⁸⁸ In addition, charcoal was not paid in cash, but in commodities.

6.20 THE HUB: THE IGLAND FARM

The Iglan farm may well serve as an example of the situation both in agriculture and forestry near the middle of the 19th century. As mentioned earlier, this farm was in most respects a sort of hub for the emigrants of 1846, since many of them were born on that farm, and many of their activities revolved around their ancestral home.

Material on the running of the farm is also unique. For decades, not to say centuries, minute accounts were kept, in this connection first by Niels Pedersen Iglan from 1794-1834, then by Peder Nielsen Iglan from 1834-1840, and later by Nils Pedersen Iglan from 1854

⁸⁴ Ibid.: 102. My translation.

⁸⁵ 1 "lest" = 16 "tønder" charcoal = ca. 2 m³.

⁸⁶ Kristian Hørte. "Kolbrenning i Landvik" Knut Storerud, ed., op. cit.: 128.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Report by the Vicar in Gjerstad parish, 1840-45, quoted by Vevstad, op. cit.: 75. My translation.

and well into the 1880s.⁸⁹ There is no evident reason why the reports from the 1840s are missing, but it is tempting to assume that the difficult times in both agriculture and forestry might have been a negative contributing factor. There is hardly any doubt that forestry was at its low ebb in the early 40s, and it is reasonable to think that accounts were not worthwhile since the sale of timber was negligible.

The details given in the accounts back to 1815 establish a picture of a relatively remote farm where farming was strenuous and frost-nights tended to come too early. Transportation and communication with the nearest town, Grimstad, was difficult and cumbersome. By 1815, 35 new fields had been cleared and sown, and attempts were made to grow linen and hemp, cabbage and turnips. In that period dikes were dug, new barns were built, as were a smithy and a sauna. This was a farm which in most respects was self-supporting, but which also saw a growing importance of selling timber, cattle and butter. A lot of hard work was carried out, but it would soon become clear that the total resources on the farm were out of balance with a growing population, and drastical measures were needed.

Niels Pedersen Igland maintains that the average yearly sale of those three products in the period 1796-1833 got as high as 118 “spesiedaler” for timber, 16 “spesiedaler” for cattle, and 12 “spesiedaler” for butter. The top year was 1817, but one should keep in mind that this was a period of galloping inflation. By 1867, when the monetary situation in the country was “normalized”, the annual net income from forestry was down to 49 “spesiedaler”.⁹⁰ The produce in agriculture is perhaps even more revealing. If one compares 1792 with 1867, it becomes evident that the total agricultural produce sank from 38 “tønder” a year to 31 “tønder”. The number of cattle increased from 12 to 14 in the same period, and the number of sheep from 15 to 20. The cultivated area on the two units was 16 acres, with scant possibilities of extending the tillable area.

In 1845, 16 people lived on the farm, or to be more precise, on the two units, and the yearly harvest gave 3.5 “tønder” (equivalent value of barley), and the livestock amounted to only 1.8 animal per capita (equivalent value of cattle).⁹¹ With that many people, the farm was hardly self-supporting, and other sources of income had to be sought for, or a process of migration would be triggered.

⁸⁹ From *Iglandsarkivet*, dep. 10/ 1992, Aust-Agder Arkivet/ *County Archives*, Arendal. The accounts in the collection cover the whole period 1772-1972.

⁹⁰ Also quoted by Tveite. *Landvik, I*: 412-413.

⁹¹ See the following table, 3.24.

To conclude, the Iglund farm was in the same situation as many others. The produce on the farm could not keep pace with the growing number of people dependent on the farm, the sources and possibilities of cash income were still rather scarce, and the tendency to move away from the home farm was more than evident. In 1845, most of the sons and daughters on the Iglund farm had established themselves on farms in four other parishes than Landvik.

6.21 SHIPBUILDING AND SEAFARING

In the early part of the 19th century many small cargo ships from Nedenes County landed directly on the sandy beaches in northern Jutland. In 1830, as many as 90 Norwegian small ships came to these parts, more than half of them probably from Landvik Parish. The sloops brought small timber, firewood, and iron rods to Denmark, and took onboard foodstuffs for their return. Many of these ships were built in small yards on the coastline of Landvik Parish, Strandfjorden, Morviga, and also on the lakes inland: Landvikvannet and Resvig. Around 1835 this trade sank drastically, but regained its momentum around 1845, and later grew further until about 1860. After 1840, ships from Kristiansand and its region dominated the trade totally, and had thus replaced the ships from Nedenes County.⁹²

In a historical perspective, the yards in Strandfjorden and Morviga have a long and impressive history. Records state that as early as 1570, the *St. Oluf*, the largest naval vessel in its time, was built in Strandfjorden, and other large ships followed in the next ten years.⁹³ It is worth noticing that the yards in Strandfjorden and Tangen, near Arendal, supplied the Danish-Norwegian navy with 10 ships and 54 barges in the 16th century, more than any other shipbuilding region in Norway.⁹⁴

In Morviga there was also a long history of shipbuilding. There are records of larger ships being built from about 1780, but around the turn of the century smaller vessels like sloops constituted the main production. As the small cargo trade with Denmark came to a halt in the 1830s, the yards started building somewhat larger ships again, mainly brigs. Four names dominated the activities, Daniel Gundersen, Mathias Gundersen, Andreas Pettersen and Bent Aanonsen. Their company built and delivered ships to owners in Christiania and Grimstad. Bent Aanonsen remained in Morviga with his son until 1880, while the others

⁹² Gustav Sætra. "Fra Landvik til Limfjorden" *Liv i Landvik* (Landvik Historielag, 1987): 354-357.

⁹³ Geir Åsen. "Strandfjorden" *Liv i Landvik* (Landvik Historielag, 2000): 162-167.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*: 166.

moved to Grimstad in 1842. At that time, the signs of an upswing within shipbuilding and shipping were apparent for those with a flair for new business.⁹⁵

The ship- and boatbuilding industries in Landvik and Eide Parishes seem to have reached their peak activity in the first decades of the 19th century. As mentioned, the small cargo trade with Denmark was blooming and was the main recipient for new ships; many owners and seamen from the two parishes must have participated. On the whole, the trade with Denmark before 1840 was not conducted through interested parties in the towns, it was on the contrary an industry founded and based in rural areas.

In his "Ships' Register for the Skagerrak", Gustav Sætra has shown who the boatbuilders were, how many ships they built, and where their yards were located.⁹⁶ In Landvik Parish, 27 master builders and their assistants are recorded for the period 1811-1867. They often worked together in pairs or small groups, and had their yards and slipways in nine locations: Morviga, Tjore, Støle, Holviga, Molland, Skodde, Havstad, Resvig, and Strandfjorden. Of these nine yards, two were situated inland on the bigger lakes. During the mentioned period they launched 38 sloops, four schooners, and one ketch. The majority of these smaller ships were built in the 1830s, and only two in the 1840s.

In Eide Parish, the yards were fewer, and situated in the following locations: Svennevig, Kaldvell, Gitmark, Vågsnes, Buhaven, and Jortvedt. Ten craftsmen were involved in the constructions in the period 1805-1856, and they launched 11 sloops, one schooner, and one ketch. Half of these were built before 1820. In the 1840s, only one ship was launched.

The tapering-off of the trade across the Skagerrak came at a time when a new era in shipping was dawning.⁹⁷ After 1814 and the liberation from Denmark, Norwegian ships in Danish ports had been classified as foreign vessels, and consequently had to see their duties and fees raised by 50%.

Conditions in the trade with Great Britain were even worse. The deepening economic crisis was reinforced by discriminatory practises and new policies in taxation. The lumber trade suffered most, especially after duties on Canadian lumber were lifted.⁹⁸ During the years from 1815-1825, the Norwegian merchant fleet was reduced by 25%. The southern

⁹⁵ Irma Bakke Fiksdalstrand. "Skipsbyggeri i Morvigfjorden" *Liv i Landvik* (1999): 33-37.

⁹⁶ Gustav Sætra. "Skuteregister for Skagerrak" *Kattegat-Skagerrak prosjektet* 17 (Arendal: 1991).

⁹⁷ There is a marked difference between the two counties, Vest-Agder and Aust-Agder. The eastern county was fairly swift to shift to larger vessels, whereas the western county remained for a fairly long time with the smaller vessels. The average tonnage in 1850 was 20 "kommerselester" in Vest-Agder, 50-70 "kommerselester i Aust-Agder. Gustav Sætra. "Danmarkfartens vekst 1835-50" *Kattegat – Skagerrak prosjektet* 16 (Arendal: 1998).

⁹⁸ Birger Dannevig. *Grimstad Sjøfarts Historie* (Kragerø: Grimstad kommune, 1971): 85-86.

coastline (*Sørlandet*) was severely affected, basically because of the dependence on the export of lumber.

In the 1840s, however, the tide turned, restrictions on world trade were eased, and local shipowner and ships' masters found new markets in new countries. Slowly, a web of trade developed, bringing ships from the Grimstad district to ports in France, Holland, and even North and South America.

It is difficult to decide precisely how many persons were involved in seafaring as a full-time occupation in the 1840s. In many cases, seafaring was a seasonal, part-time occupation, done in combination with small-scale farming and perhaps some fishing. The figures from the Census Returns in 1845 should therefore be interpreted cautiously.

The mentioned figures show a marked difference between Landvik and Eide Parishes: Landvik was heavily agricultural with few men involved in seafaring. On the basis of the total male workforce, it becomes clear that 0.4% were employed as ships' masters, 4.1% were registered as seamen, and 0.7% were recorded as pilots; in sum, 5.2% of the male work-force.

The situation in Eide was different: agriculture was losing its importance, seafaring was becoming a main source of income. 3.6% of the men were registered as ships' masters, 18.6% as seamen, and 2.7% as pilots; in all: 24.9%.⁹⁹

By 1845, the picture was becoming clear. The small seaside towns were developing into economic magnets for their neighbouring parishes. The new era required larger ships, larger ships required more capital, and sufficient capital was only found in the towns. Consequently, the small local yards became obsolete, and the workforce, the know-how, and prospective seamen shifted their focus to the town.

In the 1930s, the recollections of Mathias Gundersen were published in the Yearbook of "Selskapet for Grimstad Bys Vel".¹⁰⁰ He was a native of Landvik Parish, and had taken part in the shipbuilding activities in Morviga until he moved to Grimstad and set up his business there. He wrote his recollections in 1884, and they cast a revealing light over friends and foes, social life, and above all, the development of industrial activities in the expanding little town.

Describing the economic situation in 1840, Mr. Gundersen painted a rather pessimistic picture:

⁹⁹ Census Returns, 1845.

¹⁰⁰ *Selskapet for Grimstad Bys Vel, Årshefte* 11-16 (1931-1936).

*The business prospects were extremely bad in all fields, the price on lumber was miserable, shipping showed little profit, there was a general lack of liquid money, and the financial situation for the common man was troublesome.*¹⁰¹

The following year showed little progress:

*Shipping was so bad in this year that all ships made only one voyage before they were laid up. ... There were no orders for new ships.*¹⁰²

In 1843, Mathias Gundersen bought *Hasseldalen*, a shipyard near the town centre. This was to become his great success, and eventually his downfall. Up to 1844 his complaints about the dismal prices on lumber are constant. In 1844, the situation in the shipyard was definitely on its way toward improvement. Two older ships had been brought in for repairs, Mathias Gundersen took good care of this opportunity to build his reputation, and in 1847 there were 200 men employed in the yard. The owner was becoming one of the influential men in the township. He had overcome his shyness in social affairs, and had established friendly relations with for instance ship-owner and bank director Morten Smith Pettersen. In addition, he owned several properties in the town.

Going back in his memory to 1843 in his writing, he makes an interesting note about local plans for emigration to America. About 40 persons from the neighbouring parishes were making preparations to leave Norway, and Mr. Gundersen had supplied "Peder Dolholt, Osuld Iglund, and Knut Østerhus" with silver "speciedaler", brought from a bank in Christiania.¹⁰³

It is possible though not probable that Mathias Gundersen was mixing up dates and years. However, there is little doubt that that the emigrants from Landvik and Eide were toying with the idea of emigrating, and even searching for a suitable passage years before the actual emigration took place in 1846. Even more important is the underlying premise that the peasants in Landvik and Eide were acquainted with Mathias Gundersen, and probably involved in selling timber to his shipyard.

In 1846 and 1847, Mr. Gundersen's financial means had been stretched too far, and although he had bought new interests in a saw-mill in Landvik in 1845 with accompanying possibilities of export of boards to La Rochelle in France, he had to start looking for fresh

¹⁰¹ Ibid., no. 12, 1932: 44. My translation.

¹⁰² Ibid., no. 13, 1933: 16. My translation.

¹⁰³ Ibid., no. 15, 1935: 25.

loans. Some peasants from Landvik Parish came to his aid, and lent him sums of money ranging from 50 to 300 “spesiedaler”.¹⁰⁴ (When crises eventually hit his business, such small loans came last on the list of priorities, and the money was in most cases lost). In 1847, his recollections state that he had considerable debts to his own workers, and that there were many peasants among his creditors who could not afford to give him a postponement of payment.¹⁰⁵

After a couple of good and promising years, crises struck in 1847-48. Harvests were poor, and there was soon a shortage of grain. Denmark suffered the same problems, and the Danish stores were empty. Smaller ships, often in badly need of repair, were sent from Nedenes County to ports in the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea to buy grain. The bad times soon drifted away, and optimism resumed its course.¹⁰⁶

For Mathias Gundersen his golden days were soon over. He had stretched his financial means a bit too far, his loans were burdensome, and interests were high. Searching for a way out of his troubles, he confided with Morten Smith Pettersen and was advised to declare his company bankrupt. Mr. Gundersen’s hindsight is bitter and understandable: “[Morten Smith Pettersen’s advise] was unfortunate, ill-advised, and untimely - not to use stronger words!”¹⁰⁷ Morten Smith Pettersen was at the time a well-to-do shipowner and merchant, and had founded the local savings’ bank some years earlier. It is not unlikely that Mathias Gundersen turned to his friend in the hope of getting financial assistance. After all, his assets were quite formidable, he owned several houses, there were ships on the slips, and prospects were in general good. It must indeed have been a special experience to see his beloved shipyard be put up for sale and sold to Morten Smith Pettersen at a “negligible price”.¹⁰⁸

The bankruptcy had repercussions in the surrounding farming communities. The shipyard’s initial success had made ship’s timber a sought after article, and unsettled contracts for such timber became a financial loss at the bankruptcy and peasants were left in the lurch.

In 1835, 27 ships were registered in Grimstad; ten years later 33 ships had their home-base in the rapidly growing town. The tonnage had increased from 1,900 “kommerselester” to

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.: 27.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., nr. 16, 1936: 19-21.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. My translation.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. My translation.

2,600 “kommerselester”.¹⁰⁹ By 1850, Grimstad was on its way to become a leading centre of shipping activities in the region, and sea-related industries dominated the economy. As shipping and shipbuilding were becoming dominant in the township in the following decades, the surrounding parishes were drawn into the same process. In general terms, they were soon to become the suppliers of timber and provisions for the centrally located yards and the many tall ships based in Grimstad. Jobs were abundant, the economy was flourishing, emigration had lost its lustre, and few people were troubled by the thought that such an economy was vulnerable and unbalanced.

It has been a widespread, popular opinion that the ship-owners at *Sørlandet* in the 1870s were conservative and lacked insight into events and trends which would turn the economic tide. Berit Eide Johnsen has shown, however, that this was not the case. Behind the collapse of the shipping industries around 1875 was a complex interdependency between the industries based in the coastal towns and the surrounding rural uplands. Many of the part-owners were also engaged in forestry, and had every interest in finding a market for their own lumber. Peasants in Landvik Parish for instance, filled such a double role. In addition, a father’s part ownership in a vessel was also a door-opener to a career at sea for the next generation.

The strong signals from abroad that a transfer to steam-powered ships was in the coming did not result in a change of course. Up to about 1870, forestry and other industries and occupations connected to the yards functioned at the peak of their potential. When an economic depression hit the region around 1880, the ensuing lack of capital hit the shipping industry. If capital was available, it was now invested in other industries.¹¹⁰

Near the end of the century when the whole shipping industry had collapsed in *Agder*, it is revealing to study the distribution of occupations among the scores of emigrants. In the case of Landvik Parish, the figures from the period 1881-1900 show that seamen constituted 45% of the total number of men who emigrated to America. Carpenters, who mostly worked in the yards or on the ships, numbered 10%. The figures for peasants and servants were 30% and 15%, respectively.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Dannevig, op. cit.: 94. 1 ”kommerselest” = 2.08 register tons.

¹¹⁰ Berit Eide Johnsen. ” ’At Træseilskibenes Dage er talte, derom kan vel ingen Tvivl være’ – Årsaker til tilbakegangen i skipsfarten i Nedenes fra 1870-årene” *Årbok* (Arendal: Aust-Agder Arv, 2007): 26-27.

¹¹¹ Evensen, op. cit.: 143. The total number of emigrants from Landvik Parish in the years 1880-1900 was 189 persons. From Eide Parish (same period), 70 people emigrated. At its most intense phase (1888), emigration per 1,000 of mean population, was 9.6 in Landvik, and 17.9 in Eide. Ibid.: 141.

In the pioneering years of emigration to America, farmers of every kind together with their families controlled the flocks of emigrants; seamen were for many years nearly absent in such companies, but from 1880 onwards they would dominate the stream of emigrants.

6.22 THE ECONOMIC BASE: THE EMIGRANTS AND THEIR FARMS

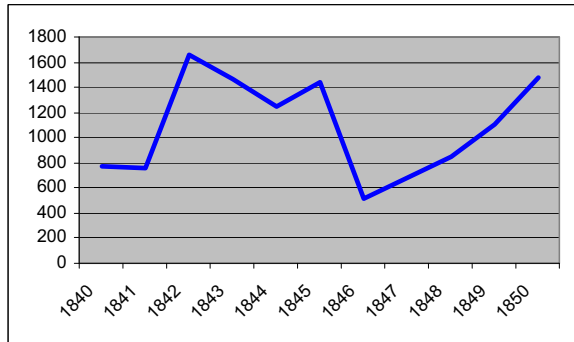
In a general perspective, Landvik and Eide Parishes were in a precarious situation around 1840. Two conflicting developments were meeting: a growing population must live with the prospect of having trouble in securing sufficient food provisions. As parents, many peasants must have felt it hard to see their own children grow up without being able to ensure them a positive future.

The County Governor stated in his “five-year-reports” that the farmers in the county did their best to pay their debts. However, the following table shows that the number of foreclosures in the Fogderi reached considerable heights in certain years. In a general pattern, the worst years came in 1842, 1845, and 1850. The year of the exodus from Hommedal Parish, is on the other hand low on the list. As long as financial problems constitute a factor behind emigration, it is reasonable to assume that the decision to leave for America had been taken as early as 1842-1843, and that the relative ease in the economic situation in 1846 had little impact. At that time the wheels were rolling, and only practical matters remained before departure.

Table 6.24:

*Foreclosures, Nedenes Fogderi and Landvik and Eide Parishes, 1840-1850:*¹¹²

Year	Nedenes fogderi: Number of foreclosures; increase/decrease %; yearly
1840	771 (-)
1841	756 (- 2%)
1842	1,660 (+ 120%)
1843	1,472 (- 11%)
1844	1,245 (- 8,6%)
1845	1,444 (+16%)
1846	517 (- 64%)
1847	677 (+ 31%)
1848	847 (+ 25%)
1849	1,110 (+ 31%)
1850	1,477 (+ 33%)



The number of foreclosures in the county reflects the changing economic fortunes, with a passing ease in the burdens in 1846 -1848. In the same period, that is 1845 to be exact, the County Governor was informed in the report from Eide Parish that people “pay their taxes, and there are relatively few bankruptcies and foreclosures”.

On this background, it is therefore important to delve deeper, to reach a micro-level, and establish if the situation on the farms belonging to the emigrants of 1846 were of the same rather dismal nature as in the rest of the parishes. Behind such a probing lies of course the central question: were the emigrants of 1846 (and later), pushed out of their native country because of a more or less hopeless economic situation?

The following surveys aim at answering such a question. On the basis of the Census Returns of 1845, it has been my goal to see what the nature of these farms was, and how much did they produce? How many people were dependent upon the farm? What was the economic situation like? Were prospects on the farm of such a nature that it seemed reasonable to take a chance on further life there? Or, was the situation of such a character that other, and more drastic measures were called for? Was emigration becoming a solution?

¹¹² *Eksekusjonsprotokol, 1840-1851*, Statsarkivet i Kristiansand/ *State Archives* (reg. nos. 389, 390), and Tveiten, op. cit., appendix to chapter 3: 66 ff.

The farms are partly treated as clusters of holdings (keeping the original farm before division as an organizing principle), and partly as undivided entities. This is the reason why the number of people dependent on the farm varies a lot. At most, the cluster of holdings must feed as many as 47 people; in the case of the smallest undivided farms, the number is only six.

The Igland farm is included since it definitely was a sort of hub, around which most of the emigrants revolved, although they had moved out from their ancestral base, and bought properties in neighbouring parishes.

Table 6.25:

Survey: the landowning emigrants and their farms:

Emigrant/ farmer; main person in family; family at time of emigration	Parish; farm – name and registration number	Value – “skyld”	Bought or sold the farm; Notes and comments
Anders Nielsen Holthe; wife + 3 children + 1 servant	Birkenes; Holthe, “nedre”, g.nr. 67; first recorded 1610. Ca. 7 acres of cultivated land; ca. 250 acres of productive forest	1668: 1 ½ “hud”. 1838: 1 “hud”, 3 “kalvskinn”; (house + mill + saw-mill)	Bought 1838: 1.800 “spesiedaler”; sold 1843: 1,600 “spesiedaler”. “... had a hard time” (financial problems) (Tveite, <i>Birkenes</i> , I: 470) Had attended agricultural college. (Tveite, <i>Birkenes</i> , I: 470) 1865: farm could feed 2 horses, 9 cows, 17 sheep, 5 goats. “... steep and heavy land; good forest”. (Tveite, <i>Birkenes</i> , I: 470)
Osuld Andersen Lauvaasen; wife + 6 children	Herefoss; Lauvaasen, g.nr. 107; First recorded 1647. Ca. 5 acres of cultivated land; ca. 250 acres of productive forest	1647: 3 “kalvskinn”. 1668: 6 “kalvskinn”. Farm divided in 1831/ 55: 3 “kalvskinn” each.	Sold 1846: 900 “spesiedaler”. 1831: farm could feed 1 horse, 5-6 cows, 6 sheep. (Herefoss, <i>Herefoss</i> , I: 302) Divided 1831: net value, 295 “spesiedaler”. (Herefoss, <i>Herefoss</i> , I: 302)
Knut Haaversen Østerhus; (after his death in New Orleans, his wife Astri went on to Missouri and bought land near St. Joseph); wife + 4 children + 1 servant	Landvik; Østerhus, “øvre”, g.br. 31, b.nr. 1. First recorded 1610. Ca. 5 acres of cultivated land Yearly income from forest: 52 spd. (1860)	1610: 4 “huder”. Divided; value 1826: 900 “spesiedaler”.	Bought 1844: 850 “spesiedaler”; sold 1846: 1,400 “spesiedaler”. 1826: farm could feed 1 horse, 5-6 cows, 10-12 sheep. (Tveite, <i>Landvik</i> , I: 234) Farm was mortgaged for more than 30 years, eventually sold at auction in 1823. (Tveite, <i>Landvik</i> , I: 234)
Peder Nielsen Dolholt Kalvehaven; wife + 6 children	Landvik/ Eide; 1) Dolholt, g.nr. 20, b.nr. 2. First recorded 1668. 2) Kalvehaven, Haave, “vestre”, g.nr. 18, b.nr. 1.	1668: Dolholt, Landvik, 5 “huder”. Divided 1835: 1 “hud”, 3 “kalvskinn”. Kalvehaven, Eide, 10 ½ “kalvskinn”.	Lived with parents at “Dolholt”. Sold Dolholt, 1846: 1,400 “spesiedaler”. Sold part of forest, Dolholt, 1846: 200 “spesiedaler”. (Tveite, <i>Landvik</i> , I: 170) Had to mortgage his farm in Eide. Had mooring posts for rent (1 “spesiedaler”)

	First recorded 1491. Dolholt: ca. 10 acres of cultivated land; ca. 75 acres of productive forest		a piece). (Dannevig, <i>Eide</i> , I: 285-291)
Osul Nielsen Enge; wife + 6 children	Eide; Enge, g.nr. 25, b.nr. 6 + 8. First recorded 1665.	Divided 1800: 9 3/5 "kalvskinn".	Bought part of the farm, 1827: 800 "spesiedaler". Took over the whole farm, 1838. (Co-owner of the farm at first). Sold farm, 1844: 1,000 "spesiedaler". "... was in heavy debts". Farm could feed 3 cows, 12 sheep. "... too hard for him to keep the farm". (Dannevig, <i>Eide</i> , II: 418-419)
Lars Haaversen Stensvand; wife + 6 children	Birkenes; Steinsvand, "Lars-bruket", g.nr. 70. First recorded 1593.	1593: 2 1/2 "huder". Divided, 7 "kalvskinn"	Sold farm, 1846: 1,150 "spesiedaler". Mortgaged parts of the farm, 1840 (95 "spesiedaler"), and 1842 (50 "spesiedaler"). 1865: farm could feed 1 horse, 10 cows, 13 sheep. (Tveite, <i>Birkenes</i> , I: 492)
Osuld Kittelsen Igland; wife + 4 children	Fjære; Hesnes (for a short period); First at father's farm, Igland, Landvik, g.nr. 60, b.nr. 1. First recorded 1610. Igland: ca. 8 acres of cultivated land Hesnes: very little land	1610: Igland, 2 1/2 "hud". Divided 1729. Owner 1807 – 1848: Kittel Osuldsen Igland.	His father was Kittel Osuldsen Igland who emigrated in 1849, and died the same year in Missouri. (Igland, <i>Slægtsregister</i> , p. 25) (Igland) "... a strenuous farm and exposed to early frosts". (Tveite, <i>Landvik</i> , I: 412)
Ole Halvorsen Konnestad; wife + 1 child	Fjære; Konnestad, g.nr. 46, b.nr. 3. Very little land	1 "hud".	(<i>Matrikel</i> , 1838)
Ole Nielsen Bjelland; wife + 3 children	Herefoss; Bjelland, "der vest", g.nr.121, b.nr. 2. First recorded 1593. Ca. 10 acres of cultivated land; some forest	Divided 1744: 9 + 9 "kalvskinn". 1848: 7 3/4 "kalvskinn" (b.nr. 2).	Sold farm 1846. 1723: farm could feed 2 horses, 6 cows, 16 sheep. 1848: farm could feed 1 horse, 10 cows, 20 sheep. "... a wild fellow"; accused of robbery; fined 5 "spesiedaler"; no record of further trial. ¹¹³ "... heavy and hilly land". (Herefoss, <i>Herefoss</i> , I: 497)
Lars Nielsen Haabesland; unmarried	Birkenes; Haabesland, "nedre", "Haaver-bruket", g.nr. 76.	1574: 1 "hud". Divided: 3 "kalvskinn".	Unmarried in 1846; lived with mother on farm. "... not a big farm". Sold farm in 1846: 200 "spesiedaler".

¹¹³ From police records: "... treated the victim with liquor and attacked him after a lengthy conversation with slashes and blows so that blood flowed from mouth and nose and threw him to the ground, kicked him and tore his clothes to shreds". Herefoss: 497. My translation.

	First recorded 1574.		(Tveite, <i>Birkenes, I</i> : 534 – 535)
Hans Ommundsen Espægren; Unmarried	Birkenes; Espegra, g.nr. 3. First recorded 1661.	1701: 1 ½ ”kalvskinn”. ¹¹⁴	Made over from his father, 1845: 500 ”spesiedaler”. Sold farm in 1846: 300 ”spesiedaler”. ”... not much land, hard to cope”. Mortgaged farm, 1830 (80 ”spesiedaler”, and 1843 (140 ”spesiedaler”). ”... his father (Ommund) had trouble making a living on the farm”. (Tveite, <i>Birkenes, I</i> :32)

1 ”hud” = 4 ”geiteskinn”

1 ”geiteskinn” = 3 ”kalvskinn”

1 ”kalvskinn” = 2 ”nottinger”

(1 ”hud” = 12 ”kalvskinn”)

It was customary to put farms into three categories: 1) a ”full” farm = more than four ”huder, 2) a ”half” farm = between two and four ”huder, 3) a small, isolated farm (”ødegård”) = less than two ”huder”. The term ”ødegård” is associated with many small crofters’ places which were abandoned after the Black Plague (ca. 1350).

Table 6.26:

*Agricultural produce and livestock farming; harvest/ number of animals per capita in selected number of farming units (”emigrant farms”); Census Returns 1845 (manuscript).*¹¹⁵

No.	Farm/ number of holdings	Emigrant/ farmer	Total number of people on the farm/ holdings	Equivalent value of ”barley”; agricultural produce per capita	Equivalent value of ”cattle”; number of animals per capita
1	Østerhus, ”øvre”; 1 farmer + 1 crofter; 2 holdings/ units	Knut Haaversen Østerhus	14	27:14 = <u>1.9</u>	10:14 = <u>0.7</u>
2	Haave, ”vestre”; 4 farmers + 3 crofters; 2 holdings/ units	Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven	47	59:47 = <u>1.3</u>	13,2:47 = <u>0.3</u>
3	Enge; 2 farmers + 4 crofters; 4 holdings/ units	Osul Nielsen Enge	36	100:36 = <u>2.7</u>	15:36 = <u>0.4</u>
4	Dolholt;	Peder Nielsen	28	84:28 = <u>3.0</u>	44:28 = <u>1.6</u>

¹¹⁴ From old, the value (”skyld”) of Norwegian farms was given in ”huder” (hides and furs). This was a system based on a non-monetary economy, and prior to values settled in money. In the 18th century there are examples of local farms worth as much as eight ”huder”, but as farms became increasingly divided, such examples become rare in the 19th century. Around 1850, an average farm in Landvik Parish would have a ”skyld” at about two and a half ”huder”.

¹¹⁵ Harvest stipulated on the basis of yield in a ”normal year”.

	5 farmers + 2 crofters; 4 holdings/ units	Kalvehaven			
5	Lauvaasen; 1 farmer Undivided	Osuld Andersen Lauvaasen	8	25,7:8 = <u>3.2</u>	13:8 = <u>1.6</u>
6	Bjelland, ”der vest”; 2 farmers + 1 crofter; 2 holdings/ units	Ole Nielsen Bjelland	21	53,3:21 = <u>2.5</u>	27:21 = <u>1.3</u>
7	Holthe, ”nedre”; 1 farmer + 1 crofter; 2 holdings/ units	Anders Nielsen Holthe	17	36,8:17 = <u>2.2</u>	17,3:17 = <u>1.0</u>
8	Steinsvand; ”Larsbruket”; 1 farmer; Undivided	Lars Haaversen Stensvand	10	19,4:10 = <u>1.9</u>	6,5:10 = <u>0.7</u>
9	Håbesland, ”nedre”; 1 farmer + 1 crofter; 2 holdings/ units	Lars Nielsen Haabesland	10	36,7:10 = <u>3.7</u>	10,9:10 = <u>1.1</u>
10	Espegra; 1 farmer; Undivided	Hans Ommundsen Espægren	7	20,3:7 = <u>2.9</u>	4,7:7 = <u>0.7</u>
11	Hesnes; 1 farmer; Undivided	Osuld Kittelsen Iglund	11	6,4:11 = <u>0.6</u>	2,3:11 = <u>0.2</u>
12	Konnestad; 1 farmer + 1 crofter; 2 holdings/ units	Ole Halvorsen Konnestad	6	2,8:6 = <u>0.5</u>	<u>0</u>
13	Iglund; 2 farmers + 1 crofter; 2 holdings/ units	(Osuld Kittelsen Iglund)	16	56,6:16 = <u>3.5</u>	28:16 = <u>1.8</u>

Table 6.27:

Agricultural produce, sown/ planted (grains/ potatoes); selected number of farming units (“emigrant farms”); Census Returns, 1845 (manuscript); amount in “tønder”:

No.	Farm	Wheat	Rye	Barley	Mix. Grains	Oats	Potatoes
1	Østerhus, ”øvre”	1/8	1/2	1/2	2	1	3
2	Haave, ”vestre”	1/8	1/8	4	-	-	12
3	Enge	7/24	1/12	3	4 3/4	3/4	21
4	Dolholt	10/24	7/8	6	-	1 1/4	11
5	Lauvaasen	-	-	2 1/2	-	-	4
6	Bjelland, ”der vest”	-	-	6	-	-	6 1/2
7	Holthe, ”nedre”	-	-	-	4 1/2	1/2	6 1/2

8	Steinsvand, ”Larsbruket”	-	¼	-	1 ½	-	4
9	Håbesland, ”nedre”	-	-	-	6 ½	-	4
10	Espegra	¼	-	1 ¼	-	½	3
11	Hesnes	1/24	-	¼	-	1/8	1 ½
12	Konnestad	1/24	-	1/12	-	1/8	½
13	Igland	1/12	¼	5	-	½	8

Table 6.28:

Livestock farming in selected number of farming units (“emigrant farms”); number of animals, Census Returns, 1845 (manuscript):

No.	Farm	Horses	Cattle	Sheep	Goats	Pigs
1	Østerhus, “øvre”	1	6	8	-	1
2	Haave, ”vestre”	1	9	4	-	3
3	Enge	2	9	12	-	-
4	Dolholt	5	14	24	-	4
5	Lauvaasen	1	7	18	6	1
6	Bjelland, ”der vest”	2	14	40	11	1
7	Holthe, ”nedre”	2	9	26	-	-
8	Steinsvand, ”Larsbruket”	1	4	3	-	-
9	Håbesland, ”nedre”	2	4	16	1	-
10	Espegra	-	4	4	-	-
11	Hesnes	-	2	2	-	-
12	Konnestad	-	-	-	-	-
13	Igland	2	16	32	12	1

6.23 THE EMIGRANT FARMS

The production on the farms run by the emigrants of 1846 is highlighted through the preceding tables (nos. 6.26, 6.27, 6.28).

The situation on the “emigrant farms” around 1845 – roughly speaking the time when the decision for emigration had been taken – reflects the general situation both in the county and the local parishes. A broader picture is painted by the County Governor in the “five-year-reports”, and it is evident that progress and affluence were slow in taking root in the southern region. The farms were usually small, at best having a tillable area of five to ten acres, the number of people dependent upon the produce on the farms was growing, and in most cases the people on these farms were forced to seek alternative employment and sustenance in other

sources than agriculture. In the 1840s such alternative sources of income were scarce, since both forestry and seafaring had been through years of economic recession. As mentioned, already in the early 1840s the attraction of abundant land in America must have been discussed and even cherished, and the wheels were put in motion at least three or four years before the actual exodus took place in 1846. In their “migratory space” the prospective emigrants therefore found ample economic reasons to look overseas for a better life for themselves and their children. The “macro-situation” may have pointed in that direction, as did the “micro-situation” on the individual farms.

From both parishes the reports to the County Governor in 1845 and 1850 reveal that individuals were taking steps to implement their dreams of an easier life in America:

[Here is] poverty and recession, and a number of common people talk a lot about going to America, and a good many people are getting ready to emigrate to America this year in the hope of getting a better life.

Some people have found the situation so depressing that they have decided to emigrate to America. One of those peasants has sold his farm to that purpose.

People are still tempted to emigrate to America, and the reason for this is the same, namely the dark prospects of finding a livelihood, combined with the burdens created by the poor relief, road- and transport obligations etc.

The surveys on the preceding pages make it clear that many of the emigrants found life sinister and problematic. Anders Nilsen Holthe “had a hard time” with financial problems. He had bought his farm rather dearly, and sold it with a loss of 200 “spesiedaler” in 1843. His land was “steep and heavy”, and his education at an agricultural college was of little avail, though it is probable that he knew of coming improvements in tools and equipment. The farm at *Nedre Holthe* supplied the people there with an average of 2.2 “tønder” barley per capita in 1845, and the mean figure for domestic animals was only 1.0 per capita. His brother, Osul Nielsen Enge, was in very much the same situation in Eide Parish. He was reportedly in “heavy debts” after having bought his farm in 1838. It was “too hard for him to keep the farm”, and the produce on the farm was 2.7 “tønder” of barley per capita, and the animals only equalled 0.4 per capita. He relied heavily on the growing of potatoes, and must have been hard hit when the potato dry rot was discovered in the region. When he sold the farm at 1,000 “spesiedaler” in 1844, this gave him the chance to finance the voyage and the purchase of land in Missouri.

Their cousin, Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven, was undoubtedly a man with a stronger financial footing than the rest of the company. He had moved from the ancestral farm at *Igland* to *Dolholt* – one of the better farms in the parish – and had at the time of emigration acquired another farm at *Vestre Haave* in Eide Parish. Peder Kalvehaven must have been a man with ample financial talents, and the knowledge to make the best of various contacts in shipbuilding and seafaring. There is no doubt that he brought considerable sums of money with him to America; this was revealed already on the passage to France, and even more so when he bought 850 acres of land in St. Joseph. The farm at *Vestre Haave* only gave an average yearly yield of 1.3 “tønder” per capita, and the number of animals on the farm was also rather insignificant. One should, however, add that Peder Kalvehaven was the owner of an inn in the little harbour, and he had several mooring posts for rent. It is in addition quite reasonable to assume that his many contacts at home and abroad may have added to his fortune.

As for the other farmers in the company of 1846, their farms were on average rather small with inadequate possibilities of feeding a growing number of children, some servants and adult family members. The farms at Hesnes and Konnestad were even so small that their produce evidently came from patches of land equal to little garden plots.

The aspect of *time* is essential in this connection. The decision to leave Norway must at least partly have been reached on the background of the strenuous situation on the small farms with their limited agricultural produce. Traditionally, other sources of income were available: fishing, forestry and seafaring. All of these activities were unprofitable in the early 1840s, and the scope of choice was therefore more limited than it had been and would be in a few years. It is tempting to speculate what would have happened if the emigrants had postponed their voyage ten years. It might very well be that they too had been swallowed by the coming upswing in shipping and shipping-related activities, and remained in the old country.

On the other hand, for some people life remained burdensome well into the 1850s. The following excerpt from a letter balances the view that once 1850 was passed, people’s welfare was considerably increased. In 1850 young Ingeborg Kiedeldatter wrote to her family in

Missouri, evidently hoping to gather the scraps fallen from rich people's tables over there.¹¹⁶ Her description of life at Haabesland is a sad one, and of course she may not be wholly representative as regards the parish as a whole. In addition, she may be exaggerating in an attempt to soften hearts in Missouri. All reservations made, her letter represents at least a partial glimpse into the sometimes sordid reality behind the dream of the pastures of America:

We have very poor times here. Prices are quite dead and there is nothing for the working man to earn. The best and the strongest men offer themselves to work for eight to ten "skillings" a day and yet cannot get the money. If this is going to last long the farmer will be quite ruined and the country will hasten to its doom. As far as we are concerned, our circumstances are poor, and since no one can earn anything, nothing else can be expected. But the worst of all is that we cannot get clothing to ourselves or to our children. Our food is only bread and we thank God for it.

We shall never hope to come to you, but if you of your kindness and feeling of kinship should send us something we should be most grateful from the depths of our hearts, we have not anything else to pay with in this life, but on the other side of the grave will be an unforgetting reward.

6.24 AGRICULTURAL CHANGE

In his work on the development of Norwegian agricultural tools and machinery in the period 1800-1850, Fartein Valen-Sendstad has convincingly advocated the view that the deep changes after 1800 may have contributed to a new distribution of wealth advantageous to the farmer.¹¹⁷ The author maintains that "agriculture itself had come to a transitional stage during the generations after 1800 – so that improved means of production yielded larger returns and thus laid the foundations of new standards".¹¹⁸

On the whole, Norwegian agriculture experienced a period of transition between 1800 and the 1850s. This transition was part of and linked to a social transformation of society, and was first and most deeply felt in areas favoured by the market. These would also be regions where handicrafts were well developed, and where social structures of trade and industry had been established. Since transport would become of significant importance, the spread and use

¹¹⁶ Ingeborg Kiedelsdatter, 1850. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 22.

¹¹⁷ Fartein Valen-Sendstad. *Norske Landbruksredskaper, 1800-1850* (Lillehammer: De Sandvigske Samlinger, 1964): 303.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

of horses also played a part. Lastly, the development of new tools and equipment on larger farms helped raise standards both from a quantitative and qualitative point of view.

In Valen-Sendstad's view, only improved machinery can explain the increase in planting: about 50% both per man and farm in the period from 1809-1855.¹¹⁹ Further, the gross harvest was more than doubled in the same period. Such an increase in productivity, which must be ascribed to better tools and machinery, an extended use of manure, and new ideas about the running of a farm, shows that farming in Norway was advancing and in no way a stagnant and backward occupation.

On the whole, the theory of lack of development in Norwegian agriculture has been the dominant one, advocating the view that agricultural change was hardly noticeable until after 1850. For those who defended this theory, it was only potato-growing that could show a marked quantitative advance between 1800 and 1850. Valen-Sendstad makes the point that some historians like Skappel and Hasund have made suggestions that both qualitative and quantitative changes may have been noticeable from about 1800.¹²⁰

No doubt there were considerable differences in Norwegian farming in the years from 1770 to 1820, both in the application of tools and farming methods. As a general rule, new ways and methods started to be used in the most fertile and central parts of the country.

If we consider the use of field implements, there were several new and improved items put to use in the first half of the 19th century. In the period there was an important shift from the primitive wooden plough towards a more efficient iron plough. In the most advanced districts the iron plough had won almost universal recognition, and in other slower districts, the plough was well on its way to replace the spade.

As early as the 1820s Jacob Sverdrup had imported ideas from America, and produced a plough designed for local use. In the 1840s the turnwrest plough was put to use and took on prime importance.¹²¹ Around 1800 the ploughing depth was usually about four inches, but the introduction of new machinery resulted in a standard of six to eight inches about mid-century. It is interesting to note the remarks made by the pioneers in Missouri in 1848 where they proudly experienced a more advanced tool culture:

¹¹⁹ Ibid.: 314.

¹²⁰ Ibid.: 304.

¹²¹ Ibid.: 310.

What they here call to cultivate is to plough with a big plough drawn by 8-10 oxen that makes a furrow 18-24 inches broad.

We use 5-6 pairs of oxen before the plough, which cuts and turns over furrows 10-20 inches wide, and we do 1 -1 ½ acre a day.

In the country-side one has started using threshing machines, machines for reaping the wheat, thereby enabling 1 man and 2 horses to harvest 10 acres a day.¹²²

New versions of the harrow continued to win new ground. The improved harrow worked deeper and faster and was more suitable to weed and break the soil. The roller-harrow, which in England came to be known as the “Norwegian harrow” became more common. This was also the kind of machinery well suited for a kind of beginning mass-production in factories.

Wheeled implements also came to have a profound effect on the development of Norwegian agriculture. In a historical perspective the rope, the pack and the sleigh were important; the sledge was especially indispensable.

In the early 18th century wheeled transportation was known in only a few areas. This was of course linked to the lack of roads, and the miserable standard of the few existing roads. Unsurprisingly, the first wheeled implements were taken into use in areas where the construction of roads had begun. Wheeled machinery meant great savings in labour costs, and it reveals a good deal of the farmer’s needs that he often invested considerably more in wheeled machinery than in field tools.¹²³

When the threshing machine was introduced early in the 19th century, topographical conditions made Hedmark and Trøndelag natural centres, and this new machine spread to larger farms in other regions during the next four decades. In the 1840s the threshing machines were still mostly operated by hand. They were primitive machines, labour-consuming, rather inefficient, and literal backbreakers and man-killers.

The great change came about 1850 when moveable, steam-powered machines were seen for the first time. These machines were costly and mostly imported, and basically point forward in time to the next great leap in Norwegian agriculture from about 1860. When they were introduced, it became clear that they helped to distribute work on the farms in a new and

¹²² *Letters from the Pioneers, nos. 1,6.*

¹²³ Valen-Sendstad, op. cit.: 311.

economical manner. It is also probable that they created social labour and unemployment problems. It may be a positive effect that the machine could free labour for other occupations, as on the West Coast for the fisheries. On the other hand, they almost exactly coincided with the first great wave of mass emigration from Norway.

The farming structure on both the West and South Coast in the first half of the 19th century was one of small farms and diversified occupations. Around 1800 *Sørlandet* was still a region where the spade was the dominant tool, and the plough was slowly being introduced. The County Governor in the western county, Mr. Holm, probably exaggerated slightly when he estimated that the “normal” farm in the south had about five or six cows and yearly sowed four or five “tønder”.¹²⁴

In many ways agriculture on Jæren and in Nedenes Fogderi shared the characteristic of being rather slow and primitive as far as new implements and machinery were concerned, but at the same time both regions were strong in rich harvests. In the east where advanced implements had been introduced at an early stage, a harvest of four or five fold was considered favourable, and there were also districts closer to the Swedish border where normal results were as low as two or three fold. It is a striking feature that the local Canaan in Eide and Landvik Parishes recorded harvests as high as ten or 12 fold. In these two parishes the problem was not the quality of the soil, but rather the limited areas suitable for cultivation.

In brief, the average farm in Nedenes Fogderi in the 1840s was small with limited possibilities for extending its area of tillable soil. Production might have progressed further than it did, but certain restraining factors held back agricultural progress.

The actual size of the farms is one such factor. Another is certainly the open-field system between neighbours, a system which blocked the introduction of modern machinery. In Valen-Sendstad’s view,

The open-field system in the 17th and 18th century was based on the old tool-culture and the standards it had set for evaluating a man’s labour capacity and the size of the farm-unit. Around 1800 ... it became obvious that large sections of agriculture in the West and the South had largely stiffened in the old implement usage and methods of labour because of the open-field system itself. Thus the open-field

¹²⁴ Referred to by Valen-Sendstad, op. cit.: 45.

*system proved to be a genuine restraining force opposed to the introduction of more recent machinery.*¹²⁵

In addition to the open-field system where narrow strips of land made for a complex and intricate landscape, the tenancy system must also have played a restricting role, though the importance of this social class was less in Hommedal Parish than in other regions to the east and north.

Two other factors posed more serious problems in the development of southern agriculture. In several of the “five-year-reports” one will find complaints over the lack of capital in farming; fresh capital was certainly needed to secure investments in new machinery, but the region, and the country, was in a process of transition into a money economy. The flow of cash into the hands of the farmers was locally linked to the sale of timber, and since the 1840s marked an ebb tide in this business, capital was scarce. Also, the banking system was still in its infant stages.

In addition, transport was very primitive. Hardly any new roads were built before 1850, the old roads were in a dismal state, and so wheeled transportation was slow in coming. As a result, the access to the growing markets in the seaside towns was cumbersome and consequently hampered economic development. Generally, the privileges granted unilaterally to the towns may also have contributed in making coastal agriculture somewhat backward.

Of a more mythical character are the explanations offered by quite a number of writers after 1800: the slow progress of Norwegian farming was due to the peasants’ ignorance, ill will, prejudice, and conventional thinking. As late as 1850 there was talk about the peasants’ twelve original sins hampering the advance of modern times in farming.

6.25 A PARALLEL CASE? EARLY EMIGRATION FROM THE WEST COAST

In 1986 a collection of studies of early emigration from communities on the West Coast was published under the title *Eit blidare tilvere?* – an expression which is hard to translate directly, but which is close to something like *A gentler existence?* or *A more*

¹²⁵ Ibid.: 312.

gratifying life? Several historians have in this volume given valuable contributions to the study of Norwegian emigration in the early stages from about 1836 and onwards.

Before 1900, the term *Sørlandet* was not yet invented, and the South Coast was regarded as part of the western region. As shown by Fartein Valen-Sendstad, the southwest shared quite a number of common characteristics in for instance agriculture – new machinery was slow in coming, and the spade remained the principal implement until the end of the 1840s, but at the same time the geography and topography of the regions differ. The West Coast has fertile areas in the lower parts of the valleys, but the landscape is far more dramatic, and the land is often steeper and more strenuous to farm than the sheltered southern region. In both parts of Norway, however, the farms were relatively small, and the possibility of finding alternative sources of income was crucial.

In their introduction, Ståle Dyrvik and Nils Kolle point to the complexity of the motives behind early emigration. One should be careful in drawing simple conclusions, and in their view it would be too easy to mention “poverty” or “destitution” as a sole motivating force. The people who left had at their disposal greater resources than average, and their decision was a step towards greater wealth. Early emigration should therefore be regarded as an action which sprang from a surplus of energy and vigour, and not as a result of misery.

In his article on Indre Sunnhordland, Ståle Dyrvik mentions the two related features in the communities in question: the growth of the population and the increasing number of children in the families.¹²⁶ He also makes the important observation that the emigrants did not represent a random group of adventurers, but were part of a social network. In addition, they were not forced out of the country because of distress and need, but they rather answered to a calling to seek a better life in America. As elsewhere in the country, strong key persons served as a driving force in the enterprise. The group of emigrants wanted to find a new livelihood, and to prevent a decline in their standard of living. In general the emigrants were definitely not people of humble means, but rather well-to-do peasants, who were able to turn the demand for new land in the direction of America.

¹²⁶ Ståle Dyrvik. ”Pionerane i utvandringa frå Indre Sunnhordland” in Ståle Dyrvik and Nils Kolle. *Eit blidare tilvære?* (Voss: Voss Folkemuseum, 1986): 43-61. The articles by Gjerdåker (2), Sunde, Ohnstad, and Engesæter are found in this volume.

Johannes Gjerdåker follows very much the same trail.¹²⁷ However, he opens a new perspective by mentioning the traditional alternative sources of income in the region: handicrafts, trade and livestock breeding and sale. He further sees the late 1830s as a period of departures, a time when the longing for freedom and independence characterized the common attitudes at Voss.

Brynjulf Gjerdåker also focuses on Voss.¹²⁸ His main concern is the metamorphosis of the rural areas which started its course in the 1840s. The deep changes in society represented a socio-cultural as well as an economic force, and came to challenge the traditions in a rural form of life, where the family was the frame of life and all activities. People were bound to their family and their home, and there is no doubt that the process of breaking out was painful. In his view, the early emigrants were both pioneering and path-breaking people, perhaps the best equipped, mentally and intellectually, people who were endowed with a strong will and the ability to carry through their plans.

Rasmus Sunde is in agreement with the other writers, but brings other factors to bear.¹²⁹ It may have been easier for peasants to emigrate, since they possessed buildings and land; by selling their farms they had at their disposal enough money to finance both the journey and the purchase of new land in America. The actual lack of tillable land in Norway is a striking contrast with the abundant and cheap land in America. Other interesting sides to the west coast emigration are the many letters from America which were in circulation, and were taken at face value with hardly any doubts about their truthfulness. Also in the early period, religious motives played an important part, perhaps most so in the expedition on the *Restauration* in 1825, when Quakers and Haugeans dominated the group.

Åsmund Ohnstad deals with Aurland. In this district the farms were of an average size of 2 “daler”, which is a medium-sized farm in a national perspective. Another detail is the cost of the voyage to America: 46 “spesiedaler” for adults, 23 “spesiedaler” for children (1845). This is a confirmation that poor people could hardly afford the passage to America.

By way of conclusion, Ohnstad maintains that there was no deterioration in living standards before emigration started. Farms were of such a standing that sales brought in considerable sums of money, enough to finance the journey. The strong growth of the

¹²⁷ Johannes Gjerdåker. “Bakgrunnen for den tidlege utvandringa frå Voss”: 62-72.

¹²⁸ Brynjulf Gjerdåker. “Emigrasjon og nordlandsflytting frå Voss fram til 1850. Bakgrunn for ulike strategiar”: 73-84.

¹²⁹ Rasmus Sunde. “Den tidlege utvandringa frå Vik i Sogn”: 84-95.

population would have led to a lack of employment in the 1850s and 60s, had not emigration eased the pressure. There was also economic trouble ahead, and farsighted and literate people may have seen what was coming. The prospective migrants in Aurland were concerned about the future for themselves and their children. Their early decision to emigrate may therefore have been a pre-emptive action to shield the children.¹³⁰

In many ways Aage Engesæter echoes these standpoints. He is of the opinion that overpopulation, distress and the general pressure from the rapidly growing population hardly can be termed the only decisive factors behind emigration from Sogn. Emigration did not take place as a result of lack of employment, but rather because future prospects were dark, many families were worried about their children's future, many people harboured hopes of a better future, and America offered itself as a possible new start in life. Information about America was relatively abundant, and it is a sound observation that emigration tended to start in areas where such information came to the attention of the right people.¹³¹

There are obvious parallels between emigration from the West Coast and Hommedal Parish. The similarities range from the effects of a growing population and the concern shared by many parents about the future for their children, to the emigration-enhancing factors gathered under the umbrella of Faist's "meso-level". In sum, they include liberating forces within culture, religion, social life and politics, and cleared the way for the loosening of traditional bonds in society. Such factors were strengthened by social ties in certain groups, e.g. between members of the same family, friends, and neighbours.

Although many of the motivating forces behind emigration are of the same kind, other aspects point to important differences between communities on the West Coast and Hommedal Parish.

Emigration from the West Coast started earlier than in Nedenes County. The 1825 exodus was in many ways an isolated phenomenon, and it was not until 1836 that emigration gathered momentum and fairly large groups began heading for New York and the trail towards Illinois and Wisconsin. It would, however, take another ten years before people from Nedenes County joined in the race. About 1845 the impact of Johan R. Reiersen's agitation and his *Pathfinder* was directing a considerable portion of the southern emigrants to New Orleans, although New York and the north-western states remained the preferred alternative.

¹³⁰ Åsmund Ohnstad. "Den tidlige utvandring fra Aurland": 95-110.

¹³¹ Aage Engesæter. "Kvifor drog Sogningane til Amerika?": 111-130.

The farming structure in the two regions could in many ways be regarded as similar. On average, the farms were at best of medium size, but probably with a greater spread between small crofters' places and larger holdings in the valleys on the West Coast compared to Hommedal Parish. Comparing the two regions is of course a question of balancing the scales. It seems evident that emigration from Hommedal Parish was carried through on the background of a more sinister situation: letters and official reports point in the direction of hard times when the economic basis for some people in the rural areas was close to collapse. It may be that the alternative sources of income on the West Coast – handicrafts, livestock breeding, and trade - carried a better and more flexible prospect for a secondary livelihood. In Hommedal Parish, forestry and shipping activities had been through a rough time, and would not regain their importance until the 1850s.

6.26 PAVING THE WAY FOR MIGRATION?

Around 1900, Captain Clemet Tjøstolvsen of Tvedestrand wrote articles in the local newspaper, describing the situation in his hometown in 1815, and thereby painting a picture largely valid for most communities along the southern coast.

In the year 1815, Norway was at its lowest point since the war broke out in 1807. All industries were down, no shipping activities, no available money in the country after the bankruptcy of the State bank. Worthless bills were flooding the nation. There was want and misery in every second home. In Jutland, grain was abundant, but up here there was no money to buy grain with. Something had to be done, though, and old ships and sloops were repaired and sailed to Denmark with a small cargo of oak timber and boards to be used in exchange of grains, pork and butter. ... In this way the southern communities were saved from hunger.¹³²

The economic, social, and cultural situation in Nedenes Fogderi in the years that followed the war with England is of course a basis for the development that would bring the nation and the county to the brink of modern times from about 1850. The war had broken the seemingly idyllic state of affairs which was reported by e.g. William Edy around the turn of the century. His pictures from exotic Norway were of course tainted by an exaggerated view of “noble savages” in harmony with Nature, but at the same time Edy also gives astute

¹³² Quoted by Andreas Vevstad. *Skogen i Aust-Agder*: 71. My translation.

descriptions of a rather primitive agrarian society with clear problems within education and health.

The war years had cost the nation a lot, and it would take decades before the economic machinery was rolling again. This was perhaps most noticeable in the towns, where the merchant vessels were almost gone, and local business houses were bankrupt. Naturally, such a development would have repercussions in the surrounding rural districts.

All the parishes in Nedenes Fogderi experienced a strong growth of the population after 1815. In the case of Landvik and Eide Parishes, they showed a steady increase in their respective number of inhabitants in the period 1815 to 1855: from 1,226 to 2,027, and from 495 to 693. At the same time the resources remained much the same; the tillable areas were in general not extended, the spread of new machines and implements were minimal, and the slow progress in agriculture was broken by for instance the slump in potato production caused by the potato dry rot in the late 1840s.

There was a tradition of versatile and perhaps flexible economic structures in the communities along the coast. Only in rare cases were people on the small farms dependent upon agricultural produce only. It is true that agriculture remained important throughout the century, although to a lesser degree. Other sources of income grew in importance, such as forestry, shipbuilding and seafaring. In addition there were also the rather insignificant activities like fishing and hunting which might add valuable supplements to a meagre diet. The shift in the economic structure was beginning to make itself felt around 1850, but the 1840s were definitely hard years, a period when peasants at *Sørlandet* had trouble seeing a bright and secure future for their many children. Agricultural production was mostly deemed to be at a standstill, forestry was in the midst of a crisis caused by little demand and low prices, and seafaring was yet to develop into the golden years of the tall ships. People were in many instances close to misery, there was in certain areas and periods a lack of provisions, and the return to "normal" life was an uncertain and precarious process.

In a macro-economic perspective, the southern coastline was in many respects open to changes and fluctuations in international business cycles. Shipping activities were in many ways down in the 1830s, but the remnants of a proud tradition with multiple contacts with the Continent and England were kept alive and would fairly soon surface and bring about a tremendous momentum in shipping industries. The moment England repealed her Navigation Act in 1849, Norwegian ship owners were eager to grasp the opportunity for renewed activities. Denmark remained an important trade partner in the 1830s as well as the 1840s, and was a guarantee for essential food supplies to be brought across the Skagerak. It is also a

striking characteristic in the communities along the coast that they seem to have been particularly open-minded and ready to exploit their international contacts in a business perspective, and that they as well harboured traditions of cultural contacts with Europe. Crossing the seas was not a frightening experience, but rather an everyday occurrence. It is perhaps of symbolic significance that one of the successful ship owners in Grimstad in the 1870s had his shirts washed and ironed in London.

Basically, the economic situation in Landvik, Eide, and surrounding parishes were of such a state in 1845 that people must have longed for an easier and better life elsewhere. “The distant magnet” was known, although communication lines (not to speak of family bonds) across the Atlantic were few and fragile. Letters and reports had established a picture of a vast continent of plenty, with abundant and cheap land. In an economic perspective, a farmer might sell his farm, finance the long journey and still have money to buy new land for himself and his children in America, a tempting prospect, of course, but balanced and in most cases outweighed by strong admonitions from leaders, both temporal and clerical, to remain in Norway and do your duty in building the nation.

In 1837, Bishop Jacob Neumann of Bergen issued his widely circulated pastoral letter, admonishing the farmers of Norway to refrain from emigration. Using David’s advice to his people in Psalm 37 as his point of departure,¹³³ he went on to say:

Is it poor people alone who in our days have been dazzled by the desire to emigrate? No, it is even the man with land and property, Norway’s free, happy and independent Freeholder. He sells his land and property, he tears himself free from any bonds which tied him to the Fatherland, he bids his friends and relatives an eternal farewell, he turns his back on the fertile mountain pastures where his cattle gave him milk, he turns his back on the valley where his ancestors felled pine trees And why? To be even freer, more independent, happier. ... How much money, how much time, what amount of hard work, how many deprivations, how many tears, how many moments of remorse and longing will this cost you, my honest Norwegian farmer? ... All this ought to awaken a hesitation among men and women, before they make such a serious resolution as to say an everlasting farewell to the Fatherland.¹³⁴

¹³³ “Trust in the Lord and do good; live in the land and practise being faithful”. <http://bible.cc/psalms/37-3.htm> (Accessed June 18, 2007).

¹³⁴ Written in Bergen, May 24, 1837. http://nabo.nb.no/trip?_b=EMITEKST&urn=URN:NBN:no_nb_emidata_1157. My translation. (Accessed June 15, 2007).

In the Bishop's mind, Norwegian farmers, peasants and crofters would serve their country and themselves better by moving to North Norway, where land was abundant and the climate fairly tolerable. To a certain extent crofters from the West Coast and East Norway followed his advice, possibly because many of them could not afford the journey to America.

The Bishop's reluctance to see any advantages in the growing unrest and desire to start a new life in America was not isolated or unique. Official Norway would agree with Neumann, and most of the newspapers were critical towards the new mobility in the rural population. Locally, *Vestlandske Tidende* in Arendal was opposed to emigration, although it reported with enthusiasm the departures of brave emigrants and welcomed advertisements for shipping opportunities to the New World in the early 1840s.¹³⁵ On the other side, *Christiansandsposten* in Kristiansand gained a reputation for being liberal and pro-emigration; it was, of course, Johan R. Reiersen's own battleground.

The opposition among the rural population towards the civil servants is well-known. In Landvik and Eide Parishes accounts of greedy and corrupt sheriffs and bailiffs were in circulation, and were used as examples of dishonest and unfair administrative practises. In contrast, America was reported to be a nation of free and independent citizens. The equality of the classes was promptly reported back to Norway in the letters from the pioneers:

*Everyone here dresses like a gentleman, and one sees no difference between a farmer and government official; they are all equal here, and a plain man's son is just as likely to be an official as the president's son, if he has a clear head and by his virtues and learning makes himself deserving of the position. Class and birth do not count here.*¹³⁶

In another pioneer letter Anders Nielsen Holte congratulates his nephew with his election to the national assembly, and takes the opportunity to take a shot at the Norwegian officials: "[B]ut the civil servants' complaints are enough as we have heard the wailing the whole distance. They had better hang their harp in a willow."¹³⁷

In a macro-perspective, the structural opportunities and constraints in the years around 1845 were of such a nature that emigration had become a possible way out of a dire situation, especially in the rural areas. On the one hand, land was abundant and cheap in America, immigrants were welcome, life was reported to be freer and with less interference from the

¹³⁵ Advertisements for shipping opportunities to America were e.g. published on the following dates in 1842: March 18, 1842, March 11, 1842, May 26, 1842.

¹³⁶ Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 6.

¹³⁷ Anders (Holte) Nelson, 1871. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 11.

state, taxes were low, a growing number of lines and vessels offered relatively affordable transportation, and quite a few social and family networks across the Atlantic were in the process of striking roots. In general, the continued debate on emigration and its reasons were often linked to political and social conditions in Norway. The national bard, Henrik Wergeland, would for example argue that it was the lack of freedom that caused people to emigrate. In many contexts, the USA was presented as model which Norway ought to follow.

In Norway, on the other hand, ministers and civil servants would argue against emigration, the main argument being that people were needed to build the young nation. Of course, it was also a question of power and retaining a status quo; people should not be encouraged to break down age-old traditions and social stratifications. The peasants remained in opposition to the bureaucracy, complained about unreasonable taxation, had a hard time making ends meet, and were worried about the future for their increasing number of children.

Based on economic prospects alone, people in *Sørlandet* would evidently see the scales tip in favour of leaving Norway. Weighing the costs and benefits of staying or going, they must have seen the new possibilities of securing a better future for all their children, and not only for the eldest son who would inherit the farm. But of course, life was more complicated than a mere calculation.

For the prospective emigrants in Landvik and Eide Parishes, Johan Reinert Reiersen's expedition to America had eased their uncertainties about unknown territories, and his *Pathfinder* was a kind of risk-reducing information. Also, in a meso-level perspective, his attempt to settle in Texas provided them with reassuring links; they had in a way planted mooring posts in America, not only in Texas, but also in the northern states. There were, in other words, good chances of finding assistance on both sides of the ocean – should plans go wrong.

The decision to emigrate from Hommedal Parish was not the result of an isolated action, planned and carried through by frustrated, worried, and displeased individuals. There are clear indications in e.g. their letters from America that the leaders at least, were in opposition to the Norwegian bureaucracy, they were worried by taxes and levies in Norway, and in general saw little hope for a happy future for their children. The decision to seek a way out, by founding a new life across the Atlantic, was based on a common effort, well-planned and slow in maturing. It was indeed a family affair, centred in the Igland family, and led and directed by three men of importance and standing in the parish, Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven, Osul Nielsen Enge and Andres Nielsen Holte.

It is true that the general economic situation in Norway, coupled with tempting prospects in America, had prompted a national movement, slow and modest at the start, but which would accelerate and swell to include thousands of emigrants. But there were other essential forces at work in the communities than mere repercussions of the macro economic situation. In a cultural perspective, new thoughts about freedom of thought and movement drifted into the country, inspiration from rebels of the past and revolutions on the continent cleared the way for individual responsibilities, and the respect for the state bureaucracy and the church hierarchy came under attack. Theodore C. Blegen is evidently correct in saying that

*[t]he social revolution involved in Haugeanism and the “bonde” movement stimulated the “bonde”’s belief in the essential dignity of man, though his class had proud traditions of independence and self-assertion, reaching back to a much earlier period.*¹³⁸

In Hommedal Parish the road to this new independency and “self-reliance” among the rural population, had been paved by men like Kristian Lofthus and Hans Nielsen Hauge. Their opposition to official Norway was cherished among the common people, and represented an abiding influence with men of liberal and critical tendencies. Johan Reinert Reiersen remarked that his sponsors in Eide Parish were remarkably well-read, and on the whole the emigrants of 1846 were the best men and women in the parish, not rich,¹³⁹ but often educated and with political experience and awareness. Theodore C. Blegen’s statement seems to fit in particular Peder Kalvehaven among the pioneers from Hommedal Parish:

*Emigrant evidence shows that many family heads, who were, themselves, in good economic circumstances and not in special degree personally discontented, went to America primarily in the interest of their children’s future. Here, the fundamental fact was the case of acquiring good land in the United States contrasted with the difficulty in Norway. ... It was not only those in good circumstances, however, who were concerned about their children’s future.*¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Theodore C. Blegen. *Norwegian Migration to America, 1825-1860*: 171.

¹³⁹ Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven is an exception to this observation; Nora C Nelson states in her notes that he brought with him \$30,000 to America. This may be true since he bought 850 acres of land in Missouri in 1847, with houses, tools and domestic animals, and was listed with a personal estate value of \$ 10,000 (Census Returns, Buchanan County, 1850).

¹⁴⁰ Blegen, op. cit.: 174.

This is also a view echoed by Jon Gjerde when he states that the pioneers were definitely brave people, and often enjoyed a position as leaders, in other words people who could be expected to grasp a chance which offered itself outside the boundaries of the home parish. They would often be proficient readers and writers, and may possibly have known what kind of challenges they would face as emigrants.¹⁴¹

The 1840s was a time when the ancient bonds in society were forced loose, and the fixed and static nature of the civic structure was replaced by a new mobility. In a migration perspective, it was the cultural, social, and spiritual development on a meso-level which gave the prospective emigrants the necessary ballast to break the bonds, to defy the opinions of both church and state. By relying on strong family relations, mutually strengthened by common hopes and hardly spoken dreams, they prevailed in a strenuous voyage and possibly secured a better future for themselves and their children. By 1845, or even as early as 1842, the road had been paved; what remained was the return from America of editor and pathfinder Reiersen – in the role of a triggering agitator.

There is little doubt that Reiersen played a vital role in the process that led to the exodus from Hommedal Parish in 1846. He was the pathfinder, a collector of information, even a *broker* who saw it as his mission to lead people to the Promised Land:

*Brokers and pioneer migrants fulfil an important role. Brokers can trigger migration through recruiting pioneers migrants. The early migrants follow in the footsteps of the pioneer migrants; past migration increases information available for actual decision makers on the advantages and disadvantages of certain locations. Provided pioneer migrants are relatively successful, past migration accelerates further decisions to “go” because it increases the level of information for later migrants which in turn reduces the risks associated with a decision to migrate. As a consequence, chain migration is likely to develop.*¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Jon Gjerde. "Flytting eller forvandling? Fra vestlandsbonde til midvestfarmer" in Ståle Dyrvik and Nils Kolle, eds. *Eit blidare tilvere?*: 194.

¹⁴² Faist, op. cit.: 265.



Landvik Parish Church. Own photo, 2007.

CHAPTER VII:

FORERUNNERS AND A PATHFINDER

7.1 A SPONSORED PATHFINDER

In the first decades of the 19th century most Norwegians had little knowledge about the American continent, and what they happened to know was fragmentary and not quite reliable. When the first letters from Norwegian immigrants began to make their way back to Norway, “America” was soon made synonymous with the United States, thereby changing the habit of using America to include both continents. These early immigrant letters brought mysterious America into the realm of the real world, and secured it a place in popular imagination. Such letters were of course of prime importance. It is true that they sometimes confused as much as they informed, but they represent the first meagre attempts to inform the public about this land of vast possibilities. Most of the readers in Norway, however, were not accustomed to go beyond the familiar and local, and had therefore no concept of the size and diversity of America.

In 1838 the first attempt was made to provide Norwegian readers with a more realistic and trustworthy account of life in the New World. In the preface to his little book, Ole Rynning stated that there was a need for a “trustworthy and fairly detailed account of the country”, since he knew “how great the ignorance of the people is, and what false and preposterous reports were believed as full truth.”¹ His modest pamphlet of 39 pages, supplied readers with a coherent frame into which they might fit various and possibly confusing details they found drifting their way. The booklet came to be known as *Ole Rynning’s True Account of America*. The Norwegian original was published the same year as young Rynning died on the Illinois frontier. The booklet was an immediate success, was translated into Swedish, and reprinted repeatedly through the century.

The information given in Rynning’s account was sound and down-to-earth. It was written in a simple language, and in a form familiar to people who had read their catechism. It was in many ways elementary, and well-suited to prospective emigrants with scanty learning, little knowledge of the outside world, and insufficient capital. In the early 1840s, however, the nature of Norwegian emigration was in the process of changing. One might say that the relatively simple pioneers, who were driven to emigrate out of need, were in a surprising number of instances replaced by another type of emigrant, of better than average education and social standing. They had some financial means and skills as well as labour to invest in their new country. Their motivation to emigrate might be political unrest, as well as social dissatisfaction and concern about the future for their children. In a general way, the people of

¹ Quoted in Blegen. *Norwegian Migration to America, 1825-1860*: 95.

the “Hommedal-group” share these characteristics. As mentioned before, they were even “uncommonly well-educated” in Johan R. Reiersen’s view. A more restricted group among the emigrants of the 1840s might also have nurtured utopian dreams of an ideal and egalitarian society. An example was violinist Ole Bull’s ill-fated *Oleana*.

The reports and letters from America in the pioneering years were not always of a positive character. Gjert G. Hovland would comment that “this is a beautiful and fertile country. Prosperity and contentment are to be seen almost everywhere one goes”,² but other immigrants were far more sullen and in low spirits. Sjur J. Haaheim had joined Cleng Peerson in the Shelby colony in Missouri, but returned to Norway, bitter and disillusioned about the prospect of finding a better life in America. Opponents of Norwegian emigration had no qualms in using his viewpoints in their own campaign against emigration. Peter and William Testman had also been with Cleng Peerson, and like Haaheim they gave up the Missouri settlement after a short while. Testman’s vivid descriptions of the Shelby failure were also widely circulated.³ Another critic facing Reiersen was the clergyman C. W. C. Dietrichson, who had also travelled widely in the USA, but had found that his countrymen lived under sordid conditions. The “America fever” had, however, gained a solid footing in the early 1840s, and the example of Hans Gasmann played a far more important role with the prospective emigrants, also from Hommedal Parish, than the collective stories of home-bound and disappointed migrants.

Hans Gasmann had emigrated from Gjerpen in Telemark County in 1843, and had settled in Gustav Unonius’ idealistic colony at Pine Lake in Wisconsin. He was a respected man in his home valley, well-to-do, the owner of a large property, and twice elected to the *Storting*. He was considered a man of sound judgement and integrity, and in all respects a man who could be trusted. When he sold his farm for 7,500 “spesiedaler” and gave up his established position for a strenuous life in Wisconsin, people were aghast and had difficulties in seeing the implications in the fact that Gasmann had set off with a family of thirteen children. His concern, of course, was for the future of his children. Gasmann knew about Unonius’ enthusiastic letters from Pine Lake, published in *Aftenbladet*, and understood that in America his capital might be enough to provide generously for all his children if he invested in the still cheap and abundant land. In a letter published in *Christiansandsposten*, Gasmann

² Quoted by Blegen, op. cit.: 64.

³ Peter Testman. *Kort Beskrivelse over de vigtigste Erfaringer under et Ophold i Nordamerika og paa flere dermed forbundne Reiser* (Stavanger: 1839). Theodore C. Blegen, transl. and ed. *Peter Testman’s account of his experiences in North America* (Northfield, MI: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1927).

wrote that he and his family had arrived safely and he had taken out a claim to 160 acres of land and an additional 1,000 acres of woodland. The family lived in a simple cabin, fine buildings must come later. He told about the Swedish colony at Pine Lake, and he stated that he was well pleased with his decision, and hoped that he should never regret it.⁴

The following year, a new letter from Gasmann gave new details about life on the frontier: he had erected a saw-mill, and above all, he had achieved what he desired most of all: better welfare for his children. He had divided most of his land among his four grown sons, and had kept 260 acres for his own use.⁵

In his *Introduction* to the *Pathfinder*, Frank G. Nelson maintains that Johan R. Reiersen “jolted” when rumours told that Gasmann on the brink of departure would be asked by the Storting to prepare an official report on conditions among Norwegian settlers. Nothing came of the idea, but Reiersen saw the mere rumour as a warning that a negative report on emigration might prove disastrous for his own position and plans. He felt pressed to act quickly, and get his own version of Norwegian emigration out first, before any sort of official document might undermine it. He was toying with the idea of a large Norwegian settlement, led by himself, and a positive report would lighten the implementation of his own plans. At this critical juncture for Reiersen came the first enquiry from the farmers in Eide Parish, signalling an interest of acquiring information about a possible exodus to America.⁶

Johan R. Reiersen knew well about Gasmann’s vigorous support of emigration and had been in touch with him before Gasmann himself decided on emigrating. Reiersen must have seen the problems created by the constantly growing number of healthy children in many families. It was of course a relief to see one’s children free from some of the dangers of illnesses and malnutrition, but the prospect of witnessing them sink on a socio-economic scale was indeed troublesome. It was highly probable that many of the moderately rich, those who could well afford the journey to and settlement in America, might soon choose to follow Gasmann’s example. This seems to be the reason why the *Pathfinder* was written for precisely this class. In fact, the book warned that anyone who felt that his children were secured a satisfactory future in Norway ought to stay. On the other hand, those who were worried about

⁴ *Christiansandsposten*, December 22, 1843. Microfilm M01-43 (1843-45), Nasjonalbiblioteket/*National Library*, Mo i Rana.

⁵ Letter published in *Morgenbladet*, December 19, 1844.

⁶ Frank G. Nelson. *Introduction to Pathfinder for Norwegian Emigrants*: 22. *Christiansandsposten*, January 28, 1843. Microfilm M01-43 (1843-45), Nasjonalbiblioteket/*National Library*, Mo i Rana.

the future of their children, and had a sufficient, though modest working capital, and willing hands in the family, should take their chance in the land of plenty.⁷

The great majority of emigrants in the pioneer-phase went to America to obtain land. The Pre-emption Act of 1841 stated that settlers could buy land at a fixed price of \$1,50 per acre. Later, at the passing of the Homestead Act in 1862, land could be obtained without costs. Starting a farm required, however, a starting capital. Equipment was necessary, and in most cases settlers also wanted to buy some domestic animals. In general it was necessary to invest about \$ 1,000 to start a new life with a family on a farm.⁸

Reiersen arranged to meet with Gasmann in Wisconsin, to compare notes and experiences, and on the publication of the *Pathfinder*, he made it very clear that he had Gasmann's support and recommendation. Reiersen's long letter to Gasmann was printed in the *Foreword*, summing up his views on conditions in America and finally presenting the dilemma each and every prospective emigrant must face, whether to go or stay. In the last analysis, his basic conclusion was: "Conditions in America promise people a greater degree of happiness than they can find in Europe, and especially in Norway."⁹

At the bottom of Reiersen's letter, Gasmann wrote: "So far as I can see, you have become so thoroughly acquainted with all possible subjects and situations that I have almost nothing of importance to add." Then he put down some few comments on marriage ceremonies, the role of the jury and, perhaps most noteworthy, that he knew of nobody who had shown any regret about coming to America – after they had stayed some time.¹⁰

The farmers in Hommedal Parish were certainly well-acquainted with the various letters, reports, and guidebooks which were in circulation around 1845. Reiersen was their man. After all they had sponsored his journey in America, and had received a special report on his return, but Gasmann's example and his descriptions also must have made a strong impact.

On a lesser scale many of the emigrants from Hommedal Parish found themselves in a situation similar to that of Gasmann in the sense that they too held a certain position in society, and had been blessed with many healthy children: Anders Nielsen Holte had three children at the time of departure, Osuld Andersen Lauvaasen had six, Knut Haaversen

⁷ *Foreword to Pathfinder*: 60.

⁸ Hans Norman and Harald Runblom. *Transatlantic Connections. Nordic Emigration to the New World after 1800* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1987): 53.

⁹ *Ibid.*: 78.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*: 79-80.

Østerhus had four, Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven had six, Osul Nielsen Enge had six, Lars Haaversen Stensvand had six, Osuld Kittelsen Igland had four, and Ole Nielsen Bjelland had three children.

In their first letters, written in Missouri in 1848, both pathfinders were referred to as highly trustworthy. Osul Nielsen Enge (in America known as Osul Nelson) was quite explicit in recommending both men, and in the end even preferring Gasmann to Reiersen when it came to choosing the best route to the Middle West. His experiences of illnesses, contaminated water and a hostile climate in New Orleans had evidently swayed his opinion, making New York a more sensible port of arrival.

*Those who in addition want to know something about America in general, should consult Gasmand's and Reiersen's descriptions, as I find their reports practically in all respects in accordance with the truth, in everything that I so far have experienced, so I assure you that I have often been surprised in reading Reiersen's guide how a man in a short time has been able to collect that much information. It goes without saying that a description which covers the whole, cannot take into account any single detail since here are different laws and systems in every state and county. It is useful for those who are in possession of a guidebook to bring it with them on their journey to America, as there are different instructions that may prove useful after one has arrived here. I only disagree with Reiersen in one respect, travelling via New Orleans. On the other hand, I agree with Gasmand in going via New York, since I believe that must be straighter and better.*¹¹

7.2 JOHAN REINERT REIERSEN (1810 – 1864)¹²

¹¹ Osul (Enge) Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 1.

¹² He was the son of Ole and Kirsten Gjerulfsdatter Reiersen, and was born on April 17, 1810, at Vestre Moland. Having received his primary schooling from a tutor, he later attended the University in Oslo, but left as a result of what has been termed “a youthful indiscretion”. He then decided to pursue a literary career in Germany, and was supported by Jacob Aall. During the 1830s he edited a number of Danish magazines, and translated into Norwegian a number of works of fiction from English, Spanish, and French. In 1839 he returned to Norway, and established himself as the editor of the liberal newspaper *Christiansandsposten*. He remained a controversial champion of several causes: the temperance movement, the fight against the bureaucracy, and perhaps foremost, his strongly-worded recommendation that Norwegians should consider emigrating to America. He was sponsored on a scouting expedition to America in 1843-44.

After the publication of the *Pathfinder*, he returned to America, and settled in Texas in 1845. He bought 1,476 acres of land in Henderson County, and the Norwegian population increased the next year when his two brothers, Christian and George, arrived with a group of fifty settlers. The colony was originally named *Normandy*, but after 1848 merged with nearby *Brownsboro*, and took the name of the latter. The settlement remained small, and in 1850 Reiersen founded a new colony in *Four Mile Prairie*, also known as *Prairieville*.

Reiersen married Henrietta Christine Waldt in 1836. The couple had six sons and two daughters. Henrietta died in childbirth in 1851, and Reiersen then married Oline Jacobine Ørbek, the widow of his brother Christian. Reiersen died in *Prairieville* in 1864, and was buried on his farm.

Johan Reinert Reiersen was undoubtedly one of the most controversial, yet gifted intellectuals in Norway in the mid -19th century. As editor of *Christiansandsposten* he bravely held his position as an uncommonly outspoken champion of a variety of radical causes in the Norwegian newspaper controversies in the late 1830s and early 1840s. It is a somewhat curious fact that no official biography exists, although his stormy life and zeal in all kinds of projects certainly calls for such a work. Two articles stand forth as excellent yet restricted contributions to an understanding of his exploits: Frank G. Nelson's introduction to his translation of the *Pathfinder*, and Einar Haugen's analysis of Reiersen's "indiscretions" during his stay in Oslo. In addition, Ingrid Semmingsen has given interesting interpretations of Reiersen's life and character in for instance *Veien mot vest*. It is not within the scope of this dissertation to give a full account of Reiersen's life, only to investigate his role in linking "intellectual", cultural, and nonconformist milieus in the county, sowing the seeds of curiosity about America, establishing himself as an opinion-builder, primarily in the two neighbouring counties at Agder, and furnishing in particular the "Hommedal-group" with guidelines for emigration in the form of his book and report from America.¹³

When Reiersen set his course for preparatory studies in Oslo at the age of 21, he brought with him a solid cultural knowledge, acquired through contacts with men like Nicolai Tvede, Hans Jacob Grøgaard, and of course his father, Ole Reiersen. Most important was probably the inspiration and example set by the liberal minister Nicolai Tvede, who was an ardent champion of new crops and new agricultural techniques, and also fought to improve the common schools and poor relief. His concerns were later on picked up by Johan Reinert Reiersen, and were made the subject of numerous editorial crusades in *Christiansandsposten*.

Ole Reiersen inspired his young son to react against the burdensome fees imposed by civil servants and the clergy alike, and they shared an ill-concealed scepticism in relation to the bureaucracy. Hans Jacob Grøgaard also had a formative influence upon Johan Reinert Reiersen. The two remained close in later years, and Reiersen drew upon Grøgaard's "rationalism" and interest in education. To add, Grøgaard had been one of the "founding fathers" at Eidsvoll, and Reiersen's life-long interest in politics may have stemmed from his admiration for the man who had participated in drawing up the Constitution in 1814.

¹³ Johan Reinert Reiersen. *Veiviser for norske Emigranter til De forende nordamerikanske stater og Texas* (Christiania: P.T. Malling, 1844), translated and introduced by Frank G. Nelson under the title *Pathfinder for Norwegian Emigrants* (Northfield,MI: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1981). Einar Haugen. "J.R. Reiersen's Indiscretions" *Norwegian-American Studies* 21 (1962): 269-277. http://www.naha.stolaf.edu/pubs/nas/volume21/vol21_10.html (Accessed October 10, 2007).

Subsidized by Jacob Aall, Reiersen went to Oslo with two other young men from Holt Parish: Knud Knudsen and Knud Jørgensen. They were farm boys, and Reiersen had been their tutor in languages. All three passed their matriculation examination, Reiersen with the lowest grade. It was indeed a feat in those days for three students of humble means and also from the same rural parish to succeed in this way.

During the stay in Oslo came the incident which has been called Reiersen's "youthful indiscretion". Possibly meant as a practical joke, the incident all the same stuck to his name, even blackened it, and made him an unacceptable and dubious figure in certain circles. Ingrid Semmingsen has remarked that he was not an orderly man, and his enemies found it quite easy to insinuate irregularities in his economic affairs. Apart from his violation of the election law in 1841, however, nothing concrete came to the surface during his years in Christiansand, but the smear campaign went on among other newspaper editors. There was always a hint that he was not wholly honourable, and that his activities would not stand the full light of day.¹⁴

In Einar Haugen's view, the man who initiated the campaign against Reiersen was Knud Knudsen, his boyhood friend and companion in studies.¹⁵ According to Knudsen there were many escapades in Oslo, but the one episode which really angered him had to do with money. Reiersen had learnt from another student that Knudsen was about to receive a money-order of 30 "riksdaler". He hurried ahead of Knudsen to the post office, and signed it in Knudsen's name. The fraud was quickly discovered, and a few days later Reiersen fled to Copenhagen to avoid the legal consequences. Knudsen fumed with anger, and for the rest of his life he seems to have kept alive his disregard, not to say hate, for Reiersen. On various occasions, Knudsen condemned his former friend as "a liar", "a thief", a man "lacking character", and a man "whose welfare [had] suffered shipwreck".¹⁶

In Ingrid Semmingsen's opinion Johan Reinert Reiersen was undoubtedly an ambitious man, gifted, but lacking persistence, and prone to rather swift changes in plans and intentions.¹⁷ Einar Haugen remarks that it is impossible to overlook Knud Knudsen's harsh attacks on his former friend – after all, Knudsen knew Reiersen well.

Reiersen was clearly nowhere near so scrupulous in his dealings as a man in the public eye needed to be if he were to maintain his following. From the beginning

¹⁴ Ingrid Semmingsen. *Veien mot vest: Utvandringen fra Norge til Amerika, 1825-1865* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1941): 208.

¹⁵ Knud Knudsen was later to become a main figure in the lasting controversy over the "question of language" in Norway. Advocating a slow replacement of Danish by "riksmål", he was opposed to Ivar Aasen's radical dialect-based "landsmål". In the end, Knudsen's version became the dominant one.

¹⁶ Haugen, op. cit.: 2-3 (digital version).

¹⁷ Semmingsen, op. cit.: 208.

*there was combined with his brilliance of personality a lack of judgement which later found expression in the enthusiasm with which he promoted land areas that proved to be poor, and in the uncritical praise of freedom which he lavished on a slaveholding state.*¹⁸

From the point of view of personal character, it is interesting to compare Reiersen's impatient and perhaps fickle spirit with Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven's honest but rather slow and meticulous conduct, both in his daily affairs in Hommedal Parish, but also when it came to select the best place to settle in St. Joseph. In this difference in temper there is possibly the seed which later, together with other factors, developed into a distrust of some kind which might explain the "Hommedal group's" dissociation from Reiersen and his colony in Texas.

Johan Reinert Reiersen left the still provincial capital for Copenhagen in 1832, and thereby moved into the mainstream of cultural and intellectual Europe at that time. He made a living by translating novels and "whatever it was", to use Knud Knudsen's contemptuous term.¹⁹ But he also edited several literary and cultural journals, and extended his knowledge of English, German, and French. He met Henriette Christine Waldt, daughter of a wealthy Copenhagen family, and married her in 1836. She would later join him in Texas, and died there in 1850. Between 1837 and 1838 Reiersen probably spent some time in Hamburg, but then returned to Norway and his parents' house in Holt with his family in 1838. Before long he was solidly standing on his own feet as editor of *Christiansandsposten*, with a wide range of experiences and abreast of contemporary thinking and writing.

7.3 CHRISTIANSANDSPOSTEN (1839 – 1843)

It is unclear how Reiersen found the funds to start his newspaper in Christiansand, the largest town on the southern coastline. Somehow, he did find the necessary capital, and on June 3, 1839, the first issue of *Christiansandsposten* appeared.

From the start Reiersen introduced a new and vigorous policy in editing his provincial newspaper. He had his own correspondents in towns like Christiania, Bergen, and Drammen, and announced briskly that his paper would be independent of all political parties. The newspaper rapidly gained a reputation as well-written, interesting, and controversial. It is amazing that Reiersen managed to keep up a high level of intellectual performance in his paper – and equally impressive that he found equal tastes among his readers. After all, this

¹⁸ Haugen, op. cit.: 3-4 (digital version).

¹⁹ Quoted by Haugen, op. cit.: 12 (digital version).

was a time with wide-spread illiteracy among the majority of the population. Before long, Reiersen's crusades had outraged the Christiania press, especially the powerful and influential *Morgenbladet*. Two arch-enemies emerged through the skirmishes of the pen and mind, editors Ludvig Daa of *Granskeren*, and Adolf Stabell of *Morgenbladet*.

Also, the whole power structure in Norway was outraged at Reiersen's radical and unorthodox views. He was definitely not a man who could be ignored, and both the sheer nature and brazenness of his articles brought him many enemies. It is surprising that the newspaper prospered, although the opinions it voiced were to a large extent held locally. Reiersen's liberal friends and relations at Holt must really have broken the ground for his new ideas.

In his editorial crusades Reiersen struck out in many directions. He first gained a national reputation by attacking the widespread abuse of alcohol. Practical action followed the ideas, and he was personally responsible for organizing temperance societies after an American model. He was an ardent defender of the freedom of the press, and was in the battle line for implementing the ideals and rights found in the Constitution. In a later stage, he would evaluate America's success in following and living by such ideals, whereas Norway was slow in doing the same. It is also noteworthy that he opened his columns for Cleng Peerson at a time when *Bergens Tidende* had banned the pioneer from the paper.²⁰ Reiersen likewise pressed for religious toleration, and would support writer Henrik Wergeland in his campaign to admit Jews to the country.

Taking up the views held by Nicolai Tvede and Hans Jacob Grøgaard, Reiersen wanted to emphasize the importance of good common schools and agricultural colleges at the expense of institutions of higher learning. In his mind, the latter mostly catered for the privileged classes. He was opposed to massive spending on the navy, and highly disliked the construction of new roads for military purposes. The reform of the poor laws was close to his heart, as was the removal of trade restrictions, and the rights of women.

In the process of maturing his opinions, two themes came to be emphasized in *Christiansandsposten*. From the very start, Reiersen saw it as one of his primary targets to lash out against the abuses and arrogance of the civil servants. It seems that his newspaper would welcome any attack on the bureaucracy, and tales and stories about such abuses flourished. Also locally, his disdain for the state officials struck a note of sympathy among his

²⁰ Frank G. Nelson, *Introduction*: 25.

readers, not least among the “uncommonly well-educated” farmers of Landvik and Eide Parishes.

The success of Ole Rynning’s *Account* in 1838, had probably convinced Reiersen that the time was ripe for a discussion of emigration from Norway. Already in the first issue he printed a long article on the subject, and followed the same path in September by including parts of a long letter from an unidentified Dane who had settled in Missouri. At this point, however, his ideas about emigration were still fleeting; in fact, he was still uncertain about the location of a Norwegian colony. He had in some measure favoured North America in the initial article, but he was weighing other candidates like Australia, Brazil, New Zealand, and Chile. There were also indications in his early articles that he even hoped for subsidies from the government to establish Norwegian settlements.

Christiansandsposten made it a pattern to publish letters from Norwegian emigrants, and also to include excerpts from books on American conditions, like Marryat’s *Diary in America*. By 1842, however, Reiersen must have felt that he was on secure ground, and the somewhat scattered pattern of glimpses of the wonders of America, took the form of a more organized campaign in the favour of emigration. The following survey highlights the stages in this process, from the early part of 1842, until he left on his scouting expedition to America in June, 1843.²¹

March 30, 1842:

In a long article, directed at traders and citizens of Christiansand, Reiersen attacked the Norwegian restrictions on trade and commerce. To him, the situation contrasted the liberal and free practises in the United States. Reiersen found the reason for this lack of progress in Norway, in the slow implementation of the sound principles of freedom written into the Constitution. As such, the article was more of a plea for necessary political democracy in Norway, but of course, Reiersen’s glowing admiration for American affairs did not counter the growing interest in emigration.

October 14, 17, and 19, 1842:

In October Reiersen reprinted his arguments in favour of emigration, published for the first time in 1839. He did so “for the benefit of those readers who were not subscribers when they first were published” three years earlier. He was concerned that unless Norwegian

²¹ *Christiansandsposten*; microfilm, (1839-1840), M 14-33 (1841-1842) and M 01-43 (1843-1845), Nasjonalbiblioteket/ National Library, Mo i Rana.

emigrants settled in well-organized communities in America, they would soon be scattered and lose their identity.

October 24, 1842:

In this article Reiersen picked up the battle-axe, and mentioned (with some pride) that the awesome powers of church, state and press had failed to dissuade people from leaving for America.

October 26, 1842:

Now he discussed the successful Swedish trade with Australia – a country which he had mentioned in earlier articles as a possible site for settlement.

October 31, 1842:

In a reprint from *Skiensposten*, another pro-emigration newspaper, Reiersen borrowed a long account of the experiences in America of a farmer named Knud Aslaksen. Aslaksen had emigrated from Telemark in 1839, had travelled widely on the Great Lakes and in the Mississippi Valley, and had met with lay preacher Elling Eielsen. He had worked as a farm hand and a mechanic, and had earned enough money to be able to purchase two farms. In general, he praised everything in America, except for his warning to avoid the swindlers in New York, and came to represent for Reiersen a solid proof that his faith in emigration was well-founded.

November 16, 1842:

In his articles during the month of October, Reiersen had in reality staged a planned informative campaign in favour of emigration. By mid-November he was ready to present his views and recommendation in finished form.

People were leaving from many districts in the south, Reiersen remarked; in particular he mentioned Skien which would be the port of embarkation for groups of emigrants from Telemark. “We have received private information about similar plans, and that in some districts to the east of Christiansand, namely Eide, Landvik and Fjære, interest in emigration has awakened.”²²

²² My translation.

The essence of Reiersen's article was really a repetition of what he had maintained on earlier occasions: Norwegian emigrants must gather in settlements rather than scatter without a firm plan. They should have a clear idea as to where they were heading, and must organize their whole exodus carefully. In Reiersen's view there were only two possible places of settlement, Australia – which was too far away – and North America, which was his obvious choice. The United States could offer the settlers every advantage of resources, a good government, and a satisfactory social system. Canada was left out because of a harsh climate. Good leadership was also essential for a settlement to prosper. It is possible to find hints that Reiersen saw himself as an organizer and natural leader of such a venture.

In the end Reiersen's central question was: "What should people who are tempted to emigrate do, to secure the maximum gain for themselves and their country?"²³ In his own case, Reiersen evidently went about planning his own departure in a quiet way, not revealing his plans until well into 1843. When he did go, after having turned the editorship over to H.R. Thane, friends and foes were taken by surprise, finding it incomprehensible that he would leave a flourishing business. Knud Knudsen, however, held that the newspaper had become unprofitable, and that Reiersen had "suffered shipwreck", financially and personally.²⁴ The truth was that Reiersen's sale of his newspaper and a printing shop gave him a nice profit which enabled him to finance his own emigration, and support his wife and children while he was on his scouting expedition in 1843-44. Frank G. Nelson is in all probability right in saying that "[w]hatever his reasons for leaving Norway, they were certainly not financial."²⁵

At this particular time in Reiersen's career, Hans Gasmann made his sensational decision to emigrate with his large family. As mentioned, Reiersen was deeply influenced by Gasmann's departure, but of greater practical importance was evidently the approach made by a group of farmers in Landvik and Eide Parishes. In the form of a letter to the editor they revealed their awakened interest in emigrating to America:²⁶

January 12, 1843:

²³ My translation.

²⁴ Nelson, *Introduction*: 21.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ The "Two Norwegian Farmers" are almost with certainty identified as Osul Nielsen Enge and his brother Anders Nielsen Holte. Quite possibly their cousin, Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven, had also taken part in the deliberations made prior to the letter.

In relation to the various opinions which have been expressed in "Christiansandsposten" concerning emigration from Norway, it seems that – after further deliberation – the Free States of North America is the only place one could safely choose. Other places, for instance Australia and South America may have certain advantages as regards both fertile land and climate, but the possibility of establishing a colony made up of Norwegian emigrants seems to be slight, in particular from Norway where emigration hardly would be of such a magnitude, bringing together men who have the ability and the will to lead such an undertaking, and to count on assistance from the Government, would be too much of a sanguine expectation. The Government and other powerful institutions have other things to ponder than emigration undertaken by farmers; we should perhaps take comfort in their contempt, and the Government might find consolation in the fact that they have the support of all the civil servants, paupers, and inmates in prisons. No matter how sad it is to leave one's native country, without ever again being able to work for its best, we would all the same, for reasons mentioned and out of necessity, leave as soon as we can.

By choosing to go to the Free States of North America, one does not imply that it is immaterial to go anywhere there; we regret that we do not possess the particular knowledge to be able to decide what place is to be preferred.

Many people from the eastern districts have decided to go to Wisconsin, but we do not agree in their decision, and would rather prefer a place on the Missouri or Mississippi rivers; if we are wrong, it would be dear to us if somebody, of better learning, might express his views. Our learned geographers are silent, maybe their geographical knowledge is more useful for inland use, than abroad.

We do not hold the same opinions as "Stavanger Amtstidende", the whole consideration, which is expressed in relation to emigration, about travelling to places far from the coastline, as people tempted by emigration in our district, although they dwell near the coast, mostly find their sustenance in agriculture, and are not inclined to find a living in seafaring, when it only can be avoided.

*Two Norwegian Farmers*²⁷

²⁷ My translation. Spelling has been modernized, but the fairly complex structure has been retained. The letter adds to the impression that the leaders of the "Landvik-group" were articulate and well-informed.

On the same page, Reiersen commented on this letter in the following way:

*The editor finds it most opportune to meet the wishes for more exact information regarding American conditions, expressed in the above printed notice, by printing excerpts from "Skiensposten", that is, some of the articles published by an emigrant association in Stockholm, under the title "Information about America, namely the States where Norwegian emigrants have settled".*²⁸

February 23, 1843:

Reiersen printed three emigrant letters to boost his case, and enhance the prospects of Norwegian emigration. All three letters were written in Illinois, and the author was Gjert Hovland.

March 6 and 9, 1843:

In both issues, Reiersen simply reprinted earlier articles on America, originally published in 1839. According to the editor, he did so, on "popular request".

March 20, 1843:

On this date Reiersen gave his readers an excerpt from Marryat's *Diary*, in which the author compared the open fields of Wisconsin to an English park, and the prairie to an ocean with little islands. In addition, shorter articles dealt with conditions in California.

May 12, 1843:

On his return to Norway, Cleng Peerson had been having trouble getting newspapers in the Bergen area to print advertisements for emigration. Reiersen stormed to his defence; as he saw it two dear causes were under attack: emigration and the freedom of the press.

May 15, 1843:

Using *Bratsberg Amtstidende og Correspondent* as his source, Reiersen printed a letter from Ellev Bjørnsen Tungen who had settled at Pine Lake in Wisconsin. When Reiersen

²⁸ My translation. The article from *Skiensposten* was lengthy, but contained little information about conditions on the Missouri and the Mississippi Rivers. In fact, the article was in large measure taken from Ole Rynning's *True Account of America*.

published his *Pathfinder*, the same emigrant had written a letter of recommendation which Reiersen included in his book.

June, 1843:

In a final volley, before setting off for America, Reiersen on three occasions attacked his opponents. The first of these editorials dealt a heavy blow to Ludvig Daa of *Granskeren*, the second dealt with “The Lack of Independence in the Provincial Press”, and the third one, which appeared on June 16, was a speech delivered by Reiersen at a dinner held in his honour. His subject was “Retrospect and Farewell”.

In this speech Reiersen appeared to be a man with bitter feelings. He had had high hopes when he started his career as editor of *Christiansandsposten*, but at this moment he felt that the whole principle of freedom of the press was in danger. This was his opportunity to fire a last round at *Morgenbladet* and *Granskeren*. He felt that he had achieved little during the five years in Christiansand, and by saying so, left out his important contributions to a number of worthy causes. In fact, during those years he had proved that a provincial newspaper could be decisive vehicle of information, critical views and debate. He had broken new intellectual ground in the process of modernizing Norway, and, of course, was to become a forerunner and pathfinder in the events which were to bring tens of thousands of Norwegian emigrants to America. Now, he turned over his editorship to his successor, thanked his friends, and was ready to embark on his sponsored scouting expedition to the Promised Land.

7.4 A SCOUTING EXPEDITION (1843 – 1844)

It is not clear at what exact point contact was established between Reiersen and the “Landvik-group”. The letter from the “Two Norwegian Farmers” probably came into Reiersen’s hands before Christmas 1842, but his reply seems very formal, and does not reveal any close personal contacts. The farmers in Hommedal Parish, however, must have been eager readers, and already toying with the idea of emigrating to America. They certainly knew of Reiersen’s opinions, and were also acquainted with other newspapers, in particular those flying pro-emigration banners. It is also fair to assume that other personal contacts had been established in the Lillesand – Grimstad area, contacts which indirectly linked the prospective emigrants with Reiersen. Elise Tvede, Reiersen’s childhood friend at Holt, had broken out of her marriage with Sven Foyn, and had taken up a career as teacher in Lillesand, much to the dismay of the town authorities, and Christian Grøgaard had also returned to his native town. These two strong personalities were in sympathy with Reiersen’s views, and Elise Tvede,

later to be known under the name of Wærenskjold, would fill in as substitute for Reiersen in the journal named *Norge og Amerika*, and afterwards follow him to Texas. For people in Eide and Landvik Parishes (i.e. Osul Nielsen Enge and Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven) Lillesand was as close as Grimstad, and contacts with the little village must have been frequent.

Reiersen must soon have realized that the farmers of the “Landvik-group” were by no means a random group of high-flying dreamers. Quite the opposite, they represented a strong family network, closely knit, in a position to exchange experiences and knowledge, and, not least, lean on each other and find support and encouragement when the decisive step was to be taken.

The three leaders of the group were respected men in their communities, were articulate and well-read, and had on the whole a better education than average. Osul Enge and Peder Kalvehaven had played an active role in local politics and church affairs, and Anders Holte was one of the first graduates from the agricultural college at Jarlsberg. Peder Kalvehaven was definitely the wealthiest of the three. For some years he had been involved in boat-building and commerce in Homborsund, and had in addition acquired a fine house on the water’s edge. He was also a farmer (at both Dolholt and Vestre Haave), and seems to have enjoyed contacts abroad through shipping interests. Osul Enge and Anders Holte, on the other hand, struggled to make ends meet on their respective farms. All three of them shared a concern for the future of their children.



Vestre Haave, Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven's house in Homborsund, Eide Parish. Own photo, 2007.

In Johan Reinert Reiersen they had found a kindred spirit. Although they also differed from him in many ways, they took life seriously, were staunch and respectable, and were not usually victims of sudden changes in moods and plans. They definitely shared Reiersen's scepticism and opposition in regard to the arrogance, snobbery, and practises of the civil servants. They had used harsh and sarcastic words about the Government and its supporters in their letter to *Christiansandsposten*, "the Government and other powerful institutions have other things to ponder than emigration undertaken by farmers; we should perhaps take comfort in their contempt, and the Government might find consolation in the fact that they are always right and have the support of all the civil servants, paupers, and inmates in prisons."

The same attitudes also shine through in their letters from America. In his exuberant letter from 1848, Osul Enge remarked "what is burdensome here, seems to me to be minimal. Taxes and levies are insignificant, they have so far not collected anything from the Norwegians. Contributions to poor relief are not collected."²⁹ In the same year, Peder Kalvehaven stated "class and birth do not count here."³⁰ Years later, in 1871, Anders Holte still held the Norwegian state officials in contempt: "but the civil servants' complaints for this

²⁹ Osul Nielsen Enge, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 1.

³⁰ Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 6.

[the outcome of the election] is enough as we have heard the wailing all the distance. They had now better hang their harp in a willow”.³¹

At the end of their letter to *Christiansandsposten* the two farmers had explicitly stated that they had no intention of finding a living in seafaring, and were bent upon building their future as farmers. As told in family tradition, it was particularly Peder Kalvehaven who was convinced that he must turn his back on exciting shipping activities for the sake of his wife and two sons. The story goes that Karen Marthea Bjerke, who had been brought up far from the sea, cried bitter tears at the prospect of seeing her two sons follow Captain Dannevig to sea. In some way she evidently convinced her husband that this must not happen. Peder Kalvehaven complied with his wife, and in a symbolic manner brought two big wheels (also following Reiersen’s advice that they might come in handy) with him on the voyage to America. For the rest of his life he would remain a Missouri farmer, and no one knew the nature of the sacrifice he made.

Following their first approach to Reiersen, contact between the editor and the prospective emigrants from Hommedal Parish was established. Even practical arrangements got under way, and Mathias Gundersen remarked in his memoirs that about 40 people from the surrounding districts were interested in emigrating. Originally a shipbuilder in Landvik Parish, Gundersen had moved to Grimstad at the prospect of a coming upswing in shipping, and had become a man of some importance in the little town. In 1843, farmers from Landvik and Eide Parishes had asked for his assistance, and Gundersen had seen to it that silver “speciedaler” had been brought from Christiania to Peder [Nielsen] Kalvehaven, Osul [Nielsen] Igland [Enge], and Knut [Haaversen] Østerhus.³² The farmers were obviously well informed that silver money was needed on the passage to America. It would, however, take another three years before the company got under way.

Having learnt that Reiersen might be going to America soon, the farmers arranged a meeting between Reiersen and the three leaders of the “Landvik-group”. They reached an agreement that Reiersen should try to find a suitable place for them to settle, and in return the group raised 300 “riksdaler” to cover Reiersen’s expenses in America. It was a significant sum of money, and Reiersen himself in his *Pathfinder* gave an idea of the purchasing power: a Norwegian schoolmaster was paid 20 “riksdaler” a year, and the cost of the voyage from Norway to New York, with food included, was 40-45 “riksdaler”.

³¹ Anders Nielsen Holte 1871. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 11.

³² See 6.20: “Shipbuilding and seafaring”.

Johan Reinert Reiersen left Christiansand for Le Havre in late June, 1843. From France he went on to New Orleans, taking a different route from e.g. Hans Gasmann who had preferred New York. He returned to Norway via New York in mid-summer 1844. During that relatively short period of time he had travelled extensively in the northern, western and southern regions of the United States and Texas, and returned to Norway with an amazing wealth of solid and detailed information.

Frank G. Nelson has given a very thorough description of Reiersen's route during his little more than nine months in North America.³³ I shall refrain from repeating his meticulous journey in the pathfinder's footsteps, and only give a broad outline of Reiersen's travels in 1843-44. The main part of Reiersen's commission was to find suitable places for Norwegian settlement. In addition, however, he also set out to find alternative routes, i.e. the safest and cheapest way to get there. Most Norwegian settlers had so far mainly travelled via New York, but Reiersen preferred the southern route to New Orleans. He probably landed in Louisiana in mid-August, having spent 35-40 days on the passage from France to America.³⁴

Before Reiersen left New Orleans, he met with the consul of Texas who urged upon him the attractions of his state, told Reiersen that they were actively recruiting settlers, and gave him letters of reference for later use. Reiersen was, however, eager to head north, and on a steamboat he began his journey on the majestic Mississippi River. It proved to be a peaceful and pleasant trip, and it seems that Reiersen right away started his search for information. He approached several passengers and people he met ashore, and later referred to them as for instance "a well-informed farmer", or "a gentleman of this place". He was also an ardent observer of the scenery he saw glide by, and was his own eye-witness of activities like house-building and farming.

He went ashore in Cincinnati, the largest inland city in the United States at that time, and saw with his own eyes the massive migration towards the West. Soon he continued to the Norwegian settlements in La Salle County, Illinois, and found that the Norwegians were doing well after a troublesome start. It is, however, a curious fact that Reiersen showed very little enthusiasm about Illinois. In Frank G. Nelson's view "[the] contrast between the heady excitement of Reiersen's first weeks in America and the dull frontier really made Illinois look

³³ Nelson, *Introduction to The Pathfinder*: 3-57.

³⁴ Reiersen sent three letters for publication to *Christiansandsposten* (from St. Louis in the fall of 1843, from Iowa City in January 1844, and from Cincinnati in March, 1844). Only the last two reached Norway, and describe in detail his journeys from the time he left St. Louis until he made his long stop in Cincinnati on his way to New York. The letters have been translated, and are found in Theodore C. Blegen. *Land of Their Choice: The Immigrants Write Home* (Minneapolis, MI: University of Minnesota Press, 1955): 118-134.

worse than it was. As a result, in the report to his sponsors, he did not find one place in the entire state to recommend for settlement.”³⁵

Reiersen found St. Louis booming, and he was largely impressed by new agricultural machinery. He continued, however, to Galena, and from there to Wisconsin. He was received with courtesy in Madison by the territorial governor, General James D. Doty, made himself familiar with the workings of a land office, and set out to visit Koskkonong Prairie and afterwards Pine Lake where he met with Hans Gasmann and Gustaf Unonius. He spent some days in Gasmann’s overcrowded house, and made arrangements with Gasman and Unonius to have them comment on his written summary of recommendations. Their comments were eventually included in *The Pathfinder*.

He made his next stop in Muskego, Wisconsin, the unfortunate Norwegian colony which had been plagued by diseases from the start. Reiersen found the housing conditions to be miserable, and the settlers uncommonly dirty. It was indeed a different experience from well-organized Pine Lake! To Reiersen, the troubles in Muskego could have been avoided if only the settlers had been wise enough to select a good leader. Such leadership, Reiersen implied, he was willing to muster. To be honest, the situation in Muskego was not wholly hopeless, Reiersen remarked; some newcomers, like A. Hansen and C.L. Clausen, had the ability to improve upon conditions.

In late November, Reiersen found himself in Port Washington, and continued to Lake Winnebago, before he again returned to Galena. He spent Christmas with a Norwegian blacksmith in Hamilton, and saw the chance to visit several Norwegian communities in Wisconsin: Rock Ground, Rock Prairie, and Jefferson Prairie. Having been well received in Dubuque, Reiersen made his next stop in Iowa City. He wrote his long letter to *Christiansandsposten*, and made it clear that he was to concentrate upon three states in his report: Iowa, Wisconsin, and Missouri. The attractions of Texas had evidently not yet been grasped.

Reiersen continued his writing when he arrived in Cincinnati. His money was running low, and he hoped to be back in Norway in April. He must have been impatient to go on to Texas, but saw fit to warn his countrymen against the Mormons who had made Nauvoo on the Missouri River their centre. Some Norwegians had converted to the teachings of Joseph Smith, and their missionary activities continued.

³⁵ Nelson, *Introduction*: 30.

In the company of a young merchant, Reiersen then headed out for Weston in north-western Missouri. Most of the land they drove through was part of the Platte Purchase, and had been opened to settlement in 1838. Reiersen noted the good and plentiful land in Platte, Buchanan, and Holt counties before he reached Weston on the Missouri River, and continued downstream to Independence. In those days, Independence was the main point of departure for caravans heading west or in the direction of Santa Fe. Later, St. Joseph would rival Independence as a central station for the push towards the West.

A steamboat brought Reiersen to St. Louis, and without delay another boat brought him further down the Mississippi. He went ashore in Natchez, forwarded his luggage to New Orleans, and travelling light he crossed the border into Texas. Seeing the fruit trees blooming, he made his way to Natchitoches and Austin by stage-coach.

The President of the Republic, General Sam Houston, opened his quarters to Reiersen in Austin. He was told that the Republic of Texas would be happy to give a Norwegian colony all encouragement, and supply them with 640 acres of land each. Sam Houston strongly believed that the skirmishes with the Indians and Mexico would soon be ended. Reiersen was easily convinced that Texas was worth further exploration. Impressed by the lush landscape and the President's enthusiasm, he continued to Houston, the former capital, and then down to Galveston on the Gulf of Mexico. Texas seemed desperate for immigrants, and Reiersen found that the upper reaches of the Colorado, Brazos, and Trinity Rivers looked especially promising. The fighting going on with Mexico, and the rumours of war, seemed to be the only disadvantage. Still, in the case of war, the United States would undoubtedly come to the assistance of Texas.

Back in New Orleans, Reiersen found it difficult to arrange a speedy passage to Europe. He therefore decided to go north to New York, and catch one of the fast packets which sailed for Europe every day. In Cincinnati, however, he was struck by illness and his ear-trouble lengthened his journey home by nearly three weeks.

On July 5, 1844, *Christiansandsposten* reported that Johan Reinert Reiersen had arrived in Arendal on the *Europa*, Captain O.M. Dannevig's ship. At the end of his expedition, Reiersen was still uncertain about the best location for settlement in America. Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, and Texas were in the race, and only the working out of his report to his sponsors and the guide-book he had planned, might possibly clarify matters.

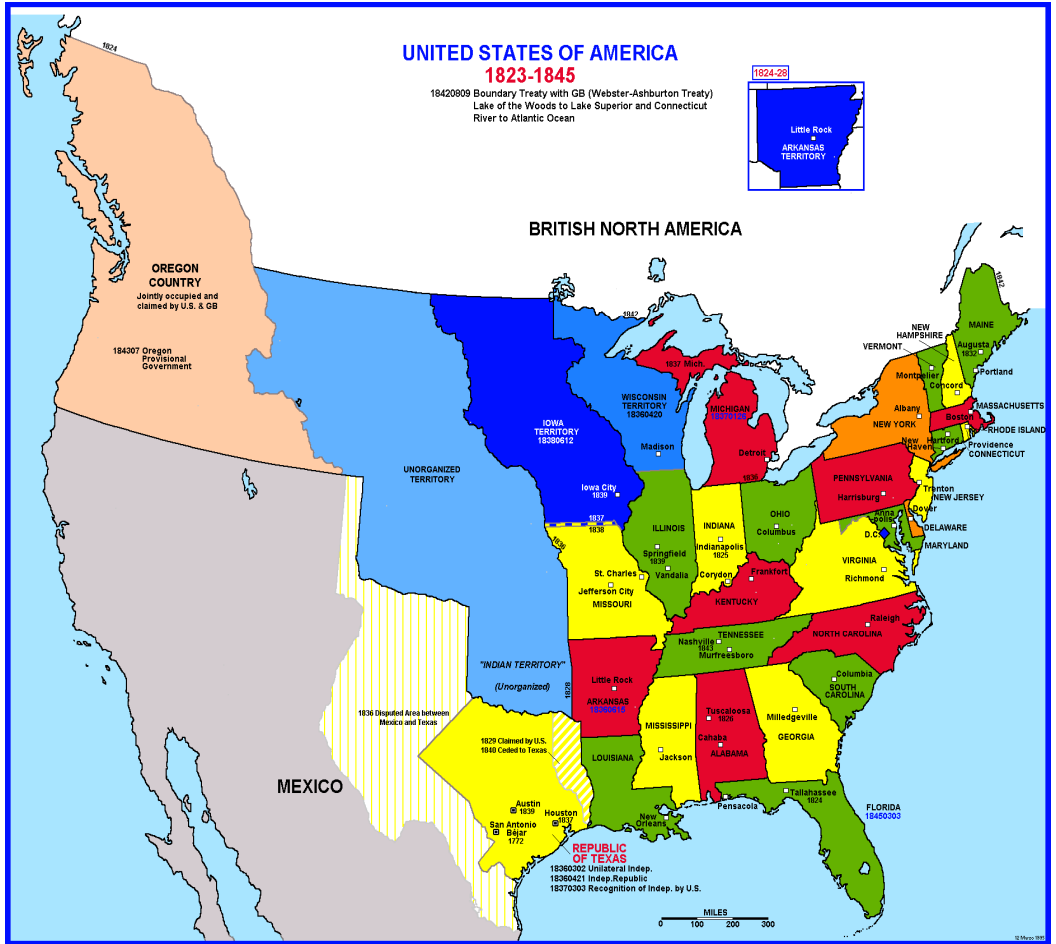
The following survey schematically follows Reiersen on his scouting expedition, and the ensuing map (1823-45) gives the geographical outline of the regions in which he had been travelling.

SURVEY: REIERSEN'S SCOUTING EXPEDITION: JUNE 1843 – JULY 1844

Location	Time/ period
New Orleans, Louisiana	Summer 1843
Cincinnati, Ohio	Early fall 1843
La Salle County, Illinois	Early fall 1843
St. Louis, Missouri	Fall 1843
Galena, Illinois	Fall 1843
Mineral Point, Wisconsin	Fall 1843
Madison, Wisconsin	Fall 1843
Koshkonong, Wisconsin	Fall 1843
Pine Lake, Wisconsin	Fall 1843
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Fall 1843
Muskego, Wisconsin	Fall 1843
Port Washington, Wisconsin	Early winter 1843
Lake Winnebago, Wisconsin	Early winter 1843
Galena, Illinois	Early winter 1843
Hamilton, Wisconsin	Christmas 1843
Rock Prairie/ Jefferson Prairie, Wisconsin	Christmas 1843
Dubuque, Illinois	Winter 1844
Davenport, Illinois	Winter 1844
Iowa City, Iowa	Winter 1844
Cincinnati, Ohio	Winter 1844
Sugar Creek, Iowa	Winter 1844
Burlington, Iowa	Winter 1844
Weston, Missouri	Winter 1844
Platte, Buchanan, Holt Counties, Missouri	Winter 1844
Independence, Missouri	Late winter 1844
Jefferson City, Missouri	Late winter 1844

St. Louis, Missouri	Late winter 1844
Natchez, Mississippi	Early spring 1844
Natchitoches, Louisiana	Early spring 1844
San Augustine, Texas	Early spring 1844
Austin, Texas	Early spring 1844
Houston, Texas	Early spring 1844
Galveston, Texas	Early spring 1844
New Orleans, Louisiana	Early spring 1844
Cincinnati, Illinois	Spring 1844
New York, New York	Summer 1844
Arendal, Norway	Summer 1844

MAP OF THE UNITED STATES, 1823-1845



<http://www.terra.es/personal7/jqvaraderey/usa.htm> (Accessed September 2, 2007).

7.5 PATHFINDER FOR NORWEGIAN EMIGRANTS

When Johan Reinert Reiersen returned to Norway after his extensive travels in America, he did not intend to remain long in his native country. He clearly had in mind the establishment of a Norwegian colony, led by himself, and in the first instance dominated by his own clan. He rejoined his wife at his parents' home, and set about making preparations, but first of all, writing his report to his sponsors and finishing his *Pathfinder*.

Instead of using his old printing shop, Reiersen had made a contract with P.T. Malling in Christiania, and his manuscript probably was sent to Malling in September. On January 7, *Christiansandsposten* announced that Reiersen's book about America was off the press, and on January 28, 1845, an advertisement said that the *Pathfinder* was "for sale at the bookbinder's."

The *Pathfinder* (the full Norwegian title was *Veiviser for norske emigranter til De forenede nordamerikanske stater og Texas*) appeared to be more than a practical handbook for Norwegian emigrants. It did contain a wealth of practical details, but it was also the first broad social, political, geographical, and economic presentation of the western states to be published in Norway. Reiersen had gone to America convinced that his views on emigration were correct, and he returned to Norway having confirmed his convictions. The book soon established Reiersen as a man who knew conditions in America at first hand, and was familiar with the challenges facing Norwegian emigrants. He was still wavering in recommending one particular state, but clearly preferred Missouri or Texas over Iowa or Wisconsin. He was, however, quite convinced that the southern route via New Orleans was the best. In Kenneth O. Bjørk's opinion, Reiersen reveals himself as an author "capable of obtaining and organizing an incredible amount of factual detail in a brief time, and of writing with the facility of a superior journalist."³⁶

Reiersen had organized his book into ten chapters, *The Natural Scene, Agriculture and Rural Economy, Expanded Agriculture, Commerce and Industry, Mining, The Public Lands, Geographical Description, Relation of the States to the Union, The Republic of Texas, and The Norwegian Settlements*. Every chapter was packed with useful details, like topographical features, distances, transportation, the quality of the soil, a sample budget for a farm, common animals, weights and measures, health, wages, breaking of land, fencing, sawmills and gristmills, trade, lead mines, political institutions, land offices, religion, American and Norwegian character, and so forth and so on.

The prospective emigrants from Hommedal Parish obviously read the presentation and the special report with eager interest, possibly coupled with other sources of information. They trusted Reiersen, and would express that in their letters to Norway. At some time they must have narrowed their choice of location to Missouri or Texas. There is no indication that other states were considered. In the letter to *Christiansandsposten* in 1843, however, there is a

³⁶ Kenneth O. Bjørk in *Preface to the Pathfinder*: vi.

hint that Missouri had attracted their attention, but this was of course before Reiersen had discovered Texas and put his weight behind the Republic.

Reiersen started his survey of Missouri by stating that it was admitted into the Union in 1821, after a heated debate in Congress.³⁷ Slavery had already been introduced in Missouri, and the new state was admitted without any slavery restrictions, but according to Reiersen the number of slaves was “relatively insignificant.”³⁸ He went on to give the geographical location, from “degree 36 to 40 ½ of latitude north”, it was the largest state in the Union, 60,384 square miles, with a population in 1840 of 383,102 inhabitants. He mentioned the two great rivers bordering or crossing the state, the Missouri and the Mississippi. The state was characterized by high plains, with large and small rolling prairies, and with a wealth of springs and watercourses. It was considered to be healthful, and better supplied with forests than neighbouring Illinois. The entire state was located within the temperate belt of the Mississippi Valley, neither too hot nor too cold, with a dry climate, and warm and sandy soil.

St. Louis, with 40,000 inhabitants, was the commercial centre, while Jefferson City, the capital on the Missouri River, had 4,000 inhabitants. Reiersen went on to state that the principal crops were maize, hemp, and tobacco, while wheat and other grains were only used for local consumption. Finally, his readers were told that Missouri had a senate and a house of representatives, and that any male inhabitant who had resided in the state for at least one year had the right to vote. The state was divided into 62 counties in 1842.

In Chapter X, Reiersen highlighted the characteristic features of the Republic of Texas.³⁹ As a whole, it was mostly flat and level land, but also with “undulating prairies inside the flatland region”. The soil was rich, with an abundance of springs and watercourses. To him, the “high land” was best suited for colonization, since it was “assuredly healthful and the air [was] always fresh and clean because of the daily breezes from either the mountain or the sea.” The population was only about 200,000, consisting mostly of immigrants from the United States, but also with a growing number of people from England and Germany. At

³⁷ *Pathfinder*: 170-172.

³⁸ The admission of Missouri into the Union caused one of the most famous conflicts in American history. The agreement reached in 1820 came to be known as the “Missouri Compromise”, an understanding which lasted until 1854. The chief issue was whether slavery should move further into the Louisiana Purchase territory. The most extraordinary part of the Missouri Compromise was making the southern boundary of Missouri the division between slavery and liberty. Congress decreed that except for Missouri, slavery was prohibited north of the 36°30' latitude. Paul C. Nagel. *Missouri: A History* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1988): 44-47. In the 1850 Census for Missouri, the number of slaves was estimated to be a modest 2,000.

³⁹ *Pathfinder*: 184-194.

various times, the Republic had made advances to be admitted into the Union, but Congress had refused so because “Negro slavery [was] lawful in Texas.” Reiersen had learnt that Mexico was preparing for a major attack, but he felt confident that the United States would not “remain a quiet bystander while kinsmen in Texas shed their blood.” As soon as there was a lasting peace, “there [was] no doubt that immigration, like a rushing stream, [would] spread itself over the beautiful, fertile plains of Texas.”

In his final chapter, titled “The Norwegian Settlements”, Reiersen drew his conclusions, and repeated his conviction that meticulous planning was essential.

He maintained that all Norwegian settlers who had lived in America for some time were content and enjoyed an independent situation. They no longer had to worry about their daily bread or the future of their children. Burdens of poverty were unknown, there was no want, and economic problems need not bother anyone. But there was also a negative side to Norwegian immigration. Most of the immigrants still lived in their original log cabins, and on the whole, “[t]heir lack of gumption and ambition – and their general lack of skills and education [were] the primary reasons for our countrymen not making better progress in America.” Elaborating on the causes why many Norwegians did not succeed in America, Reiersen mentioned four major points:

- The cost of the journey was unexpectedly high. Going via New York, the cost per person might come to 60-70 “speciedaler”. Including the freight cost, an average family would see expenses reach 300-400 “speciedaler”. It was Reiersen’s firm belief that the journey via New Orleans might save a family about 100 “speciedaler”.
- Sickness was a problem, both on the voyage and in the settlements. Sanitary conditions on Norwegian ships were often bad, and quarters often cramped. The change in climate could also be negative, drinking water of unsatisfactory quality was common, new diets caused digestion trouble, and the “general lack of cleanliness worsened and extended the duration of illnesses.”
- Quite a number of Norwegian settlers also lacked the necessary knowledge of systematic farming, and showed traits of laziness and shiftlessness.
- Unlike the Americans, who believed in joint efforts, the Norwegians often showed “lack of unity, harmony, and co-operation.”

The situation was not, however, without hope for improvement. Those who had come over in their youth had learned the language, and acquired something of the American

character. “A new spirit [was] aroused in them – a sense of independence and freedom, an open-mindedness toward religion and enlightened ideas, as well as the sense of their own worth as human beings and citizens.” Reiersen saw the same hope in the second generation, “for whose happiness and good fortune the majority of the parents among the emigrants [were] making the sacrifices always involved in leaving one’s native land.”

His conclusion was therefore that everybody had the prospect of becoming independent and free from anxiety, providing they had made good plans, worked hard, and had the right leaders.

The more comprehensive plan was only intended for his sponsors, the men who had given him their support and born “part of the expenses of the journey of which this work [was] the fruit.”

7.6 “TO MY SPONSORS IN EIDE AND ADJACENT PARISHES”⁴⁰

In his special report Reiersen explicitly stated that he undertook the journey to America “primarily because of the encouragement and backing of those who sponsored me.” He went on to say that he owed these men a particular account, dealing with the areas he considered most fit for settlement. He had made his best effort to include both advantages and disadvantages concerning the northern territories, but would not conceal his firm conviction that regions further south were preferable. Norwegian immigrants had settled too far north, in his view. They had also made the grave mistake of scattering over several townships, instead of reaping the advantages of close and ready co-operation in one single township.

Reiersen made it quite clear that it was not his intention to decide exactly where immigrants ought to settle. He saw the advantages of southern regions compared to northern ones, but in any state one would find rich and fertile soil. “Making a really bad choice” was out of the question, he claimed. In the end, he had decided to indicate ten locations which he considered unusually suitable for a Norwegian settlement. Of these ten locations, four were situated in Wisconsin, another three in Iowa, two in Missouri, and the final one in the high country in Texas.

Reiersen had chosen two interesting locations in Missouri: Platte County and Osage County. Platte County was situated on the east bank of the Missouri River, and had an unusual wealth of streams and rivers. The land was a mixture of prairie and woodland, and the

⁴⁰ The report to his sponsors is included in the *Pathfinder* as *Appendix 1: 207-216*.

beauty and fertility of the region had given it a reputation unsurpassed in the state. Townships 61 and 64 seemed to be excellently suited for Norwegian settlers.

Osage County also had been blessed with numerous waterways and excellent land. Only a small part of the land had been settled, although earlier times had seen a stream of immigrants into the region. Both counties were judged to be very healthful, except for the land nearest the Osage River. It is noteworthy that when the “Landvik-group” arrived in Missouri in 1847, they would disregard both of Reiersen’s recommendations, and choose Buchanan County in the north-western corner of the state, around the new town of St. Joseph.

As for Texas, nearly all regions had sufficient good land for large settlements. The high land between the Trinity, Colorado, and Brazos Rivers especially, offered prime conditions for a Norwegian settlement. This was a district of elevated plains with large tracts of free land. It was a beautiful district with undulating landscapes and crossed by streams and rivers. There were also good belts of forest, with grassland intermixed with glades and groves. The region was considered to be very healthful. In fact, the climate seemed to be especially good for people with weak lungs.

In a last remark, Reiersen repeated his conviction that the best and cheapest route was via New Orleans, assured his readers that he was willing to answer any question orally, and enclosed various maps which he deemed the prospective emigrants would find useful. He recommended that they bring clothing, shoes, and necessary bedding – and good wheels for a wagon. Peder Kalvehaven heeded his advice, and dragged along two big wheels all the way to Missouri. In another six months Johan Reinert Reiersen would be on his way to his own “New Eden”, and by choosing Henderson County in Texas he certainly made it clear through action where his preference was located.

7.7 PREPARATIONS IN HOMMEDAL PARISH

Reiersen’s return to Norway must have been eagerly awaited by the farmers in Hommedal Parish. They had clearly read his letters from America, published in *Christiansandsposten*, and were acquainted with his general ideas and tentative recommendations. They undoubtedly kept in close contact with their pathfinder during the later part of 1844, and were ready to act when they received several copies of the *Pathfinder* and the special report to his sponsors in the first week of December. A few days later, on

December 9, Peder Kalvehaven called a meeting in his house in Homborsund.⁴¹ Together with him were his two cousins, Osul Enge and Anders Holte, and of course Johan Reinert Reiersen. They composed a public notice and announced their intention to emigrate to America, and that they would leave the following summer. Reiersen had agreed to be their guide all the way to their destination. Anybody who was interested in joining them was invited to leave for New Orleans via Le Havre in July, 1845.

The text of the invitation was published in *Christiansandsposten* on January 28. It may also well be that the notice, or handbill, was distributed before Christmas among friends and relatives, and the timing was of course excellent. Christmas was a time of family gatherings, and offered a good chance of discussing the plans for emigration.

CIRCULAR

As many fellow citizens in "Vestre Nedenes" have decided to emigrate to America in the course of 1845, the undersigned are of the opinion that an invitation ought to be issued to most of the different parishes who are also considering emigration, to sign up in certain locations, in order to arrive at an understanding how many are preparing to emigrate.

Assuming that a fairly large number of emigrants would sign up, one has calculated the travel expenses via Le Havre in France to New Orleans in America, and from here to any place inland where one might want to settle, food included from Le Havre to New Orleans, and estimated that the cost would be between 30 and 32 "speciedaler" for every adult, and 18 "speciedaler" for children under the age of 12. The passage shall probably take place from Norway at the end of the month of July, and the undersigned J. R. Reiersen, who has travelled widely in America, is determined to accompany the emigrants.

Those who on this background have decided to emigrate, are requested to sign up on the enclosed lists, in Christiansand with goldsmith Pettersen, in Lillesand with shopkeeper Bache, in Holt parish with sexton Reiersen, and in Eide Parish with Osuld Enge.

Vestre Haave in Eide Parish on the 9th of December 1844

Peder Nielsen

J. R. Reiersen

Osuld Enge

Anders N. Holte

⁴¹ Nelson, *Introduction to the Pathfinder*: 41.

*Those who wish to join the emigration company must sign up in one of the mentioned locations before the end of May.*⁴²

Their mutual agreement in December was, however, abandoned sometime in the spring, and it was decided that Reiersen should take a small advance group and meet the others later in New Orleans. By this time he must have chosen Texas, and more or less took it for granted that the “Landvik-group” would follow him all the way. The farmers on their part let him believe this, although they had not made their final decision where to settle. Both Texas and Missouri were still possible locations.

During his last months in Norway, Reiersen experienced that old conflicts came to the surface and did much to discredit him and taint his reputation. In the *Pathfinder* he had been very open in his attacks on the bureaucracy, and in conservative circles he was regarded as a dangerous agitator. Before his scouting expedition to America, he had been fined several times as “responsible editor” of *Christiansandsposten*, but Reiersen felt this to be a violation of the freedom of the press, and had refused to pay. Now, years later, a magistrate named Falck discovered the case, and on learning that Reiersen was about to leave Norway, issued an order for his arrest.⁴³

Reiersen saw the danger of having his plans thwarted, and probably took refuge with his friends in Eide Parish. In the family tradition, he was sought by the authorities because of debts and illegal agitation. “During the summer [spring?], before his departure the farmers kept him hidden for a while on an island. In all secrecy he was transported to Grimstad, and is supposed to have been brought on board in a large box.”⁴⁴

7.8 THE TEXAS SETTLEMENT

When Reiersen finally got under way, he was accompanied by Christian Grøgaard and family, and Syvert Nielsen, a blacksmith from Christiansand; from Holt came his father, his brother Gerhard, his sister Carolina, and a carpenter named Stiansen.⁴⁵ His wife, children,

⁴² *Christiansandsposten*, January 28, 1845; microfilm M01-43 (1843-45), Nasjonalbiblioteket/ National library, Mo i Rana. My translation.

⁴³ Nelson, *Introduction*: 43.

⁴⁴ Arent Stensvand. “An Emigration from Aust-Agder to America, 1846” *Agderposten*, July 7, 1927. My translation.

⁴⁵ *Recollections of a Norwegian Pioneer in Texas*, translated and edited by C.A. Clausen, Norwegian-American Studies, Vol. XII, digital version: http://www.naha.stolaf.edu/pubs/nas/volume12_5.htm (Accessed April 25, 2007).

sister-in-law, mother, brother Christian, and sister Gina stayed behind, but were expected to join him in New Orleans at the end of the summer.

From the Texas Consul in New Orleans Reiersen bought a claim of 1,475 acres anywhere in the country. This large tract of land only cost him \$500. Some members of the group then travelled by steamboat up the Red River, while the others went overland to Nacogdoches. Having visited a land office, they then chose Henderson County near Brownsboro. The place seemed to fulfil their wishes, a lush prairie, surrounded by low hills with some good forest. They were all in excellent health, and by the end of the summer they had built a house.

In September Reiersen headed back to New Orleans, expecting to meet the emigrants from Hommedal Parish. They were due in mid-November, he thought, but the *Magnolia* did not arrive from France until a month later. To Reiersen's dismay the "Landvik-group" was not on board. They had postponed their passage, presumably for want of suitable transportation. Instead Reiersen soon discovered that the American ship had brought a mixed group of settlers led by two men from Christiansand, Aanonsen and Texe. Later, these two with the majority of the company went north to Wisconsin or Illinois. Many of the new immigrants were mountain farmers from Setesdal, and seemed to be terrified of the unknown.⁴⁶ In a letter to his brother Christian, Reiersen described them as a "bunch of wild Indians."⁴⁷ Reiersen had in reality suffered two grave disappointments. He had counted on the "Landvik-group" to arrive as planned, and had in a way built his dream of the "New Normandy" on their talents, skills, and education. Secondly, he felt that the mixed group on the *Magnolia* had let him down for no good reason. He spent some time in New Orleans, buying articles for the settlement, still hoping for the arrival of his brother Christian and other emigrants to improve matters. And after all, the "Landvik-group" might still arrive.

In his letter to Christian in 1846, Reiersen had given a description of the settlement in eastern Texas. He explicitly stated that he was "firmly convinced that this [was] the most healthful region in America." It was the place where a farmer might "lead a happy and independent life with the least toil."⁴⁸ Referring to his many travels, Reiersen also told his brother that he had wished that "our poor tenant farmers were in a position to come and enjoy the blessings that nature seems to offer everyone! But getting people of this class is something one can only wish for." In the case of land-owning farmers who were better off, they would

⁴⁶ Nelson, *Introduction to the Pathfinder*: 45.

⁴⁷ Letter to Christian Reiersen, January 16, 1846. Printed in *Norge og Amerika*, January, 1847. Included in the *Pathfinder* as *Appendix 2*: 217-225.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

have to make up their own minds. There was no doubt in Reiersen's mind that such people would do well in America, if they went about it "sensibly." He was, however, rather pessimistic after having witnessed the arrival of the *Magnolia*. Immigration parties on the whole lacked planning, so that he could scarcely hope for any improvements "even under the leadership of men like Osul Enge and Peder Nielsen [Kalvehaven], both of whom must have given up their plans to emigrate."⁴⁹

It is understandable that Reiersen felt disappointed and rejected. He was, however, wrong in assuming that the "Landvik-group" had given up their plans to emigrate. There is not any reason to doubt the family stories that they had been delayed, and had faced difficulties in finding a suitable ship. In September, 1846, Captain Pedersen on the *Grethe Lovise* was, however, ready to take them on board, bound for Le Havre, and they left to the sound of hurrahs and music. They were probably still in doubt whether to go to Texas or Missouri, and the voyage was part of a process which eventually would ripen and steer them north on the Mississippi. They still had great faith in Reiersen's *Pathfinder* – it was "practically in all respects in accordance with the truth."⁵⁰ He had given them important and essential information, and without him they would have lacked bearings and the foundation to venture into unknown territories at the edge of so-called civilization.

7.9 ELISE AMALIE TVEDE WÆRENSKJOLD (1815 – 1896)⁵¹

When Editor Johan Reinert Reiersen left for America in 1843, Elise Amalie Tvede was left with the task of running the magazine known as *Norge og Amerika*, before she followed her mentor to Texas. Later she came to be known as *The Lady with the Pen*, mostly because she was an ardent writer of letters from America. Many of those were eagerly read when they were published in Norway.⁵²

Her father was a vicar in Holt Parish, and this was where she met Johan Reinert Reiersen, son of the local teacher and sexton. After her father's death in 1832, she went to Tønsberg, and soon married Svend Foyn, a pioneer in Norwegian whaling. Later she broke

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Osul Enge, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 1.*

⁵¹ She was the daughter of Elizabeth Meldahl and Nicolai Seiersløv Tvede, both from Denmark. Elise was born at the vicarage in Dypvåg in 1815, and died in Texas at the age of 81.

⁵² Many of the letters are collected in Theodore C. Blegen. *Land of Their Choice: The Immigrants Write Home* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1955). Information together with letters are found in: C.A. Clausen, ed. *The Lady with the Pen: Elise Wærenskjold in Texas* (Northfield, MI: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1961); also on <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/WW/fwa5.html> (Accessed May, 5, 2007).

out of that marriage. Much to the annoyance of local authorities, she practised teaching crafts both in Tønsberg and Lillesand, and enjoyed a great popularity among her girl pupils. In America she married J.M.C.W. Wærenskjold, and settled with him in Texas.

Like many other emigrants, Elise Tvede travelled via Le Havre to New Orleans. She used a Norwegian ship, the *Ygdrasil*, to France, was happy with the captain, but complained about the price of the ticket: 14 “spesiedaler”. Having found another ship, she reached America on board the *New England* after 81 days at sea. In her first letter, she told that the voyage went fine for the Norwegian company, but nine passengers of other nationalities died on the passage. She underlined the importance of hygiene, cleanliness, and proper food. Among other things she recommended the juice of lingonberries, since contaminated water was a major problem.

From New Orleans she continued on a steamer on the Mississippi and the Red River, and eventually reached *Four Mile Prairie* where she settled. In Texas she met with a number of Norwegians, the Grøgaards from Lillesand, the Reiersens from Holt, the blacksmiths Jens Ausel from Holt and Syvert Nielsen Håbbesland from Birkenes, and Terje Albertsen Berge from Holt. Most of them did well, she told, but many had been troubled by fever, and there was a shortage of priests and teachers.⁵³

In her letters Elise Tvede Wærenskjold touched upon a variety of subjects, religion (“most people here are Methodists”), politics (“this is a paradise for poor people”), occupations (“cattle farming is most important”), culture (“we have founded a reading association, but need books from Norway”), and neighbours (“our neighbours are very kind to each other”).⁵⁴

She was an ardent defender of the Texas settlement, and praised the accomplishments of her fellow immigrants in Four Mile Prairie. In an article in 1869 she wrote:⁵⁵

For poor People Texas is a Paradise; Anyone who is willing to work can have a good Profit any Time of the Year and Children are not considered a Burden, but a

⁵³ Øyvind Bjorvatn. “Ladyen med pennen” *Agderposten*, March 25, 2006.

⁵⁴ A full presentation of the Norwegians in Texas is given in Odd Magnar Syversen and Derwood Johnson. *Norge i Texas* (Stange: Stange Historielag, 1982).

⁵⁵ *Billed-Magazin*, February 19, 1869. My translation.

great Help to their Parents. In the Fall children can make a nice profit from picking Cotton.

In the same article she also touched upon the “Landvik-group’s” failure to show up with Johan R. Reiersen in Texas:

This group was delayed in Norway, and when they finally arrived in New Orleans they went not to Texas but to Missouri, where they are believed to have settled near St. Joseph. No one knows the reason for this change because, strange to say, they have never written to their friends in Texas nor even answered letters sent to them by members of our colony.

Such strange behaviour perhaps suggested that more than uneasiness about venturing into a possible war zone had led to their change of destination. Something may have happened in New Orleans, or even before in Norway, which made the settlers quite suddenly and completely disassociate themselves from Johan Reinert Reiersen and all the Norwegians in Texas.

PART TWO:
IMMIGRANTS

**CHAPTER VIII:
HEADING NORTH**



Above: St. Joseph in the 1850s; by courtesy of the St. Joseph Museum Inc.

Below: St. Joseph from the Kansas side of the Missouri River, ca. 1860; by courtesy of the St. Joseph Museum Inc.



[VIEW OF ST. JOE, MISSOURI, FROM THE KANSAS SIDE.]

8.1 AT A CROSS-ROADS

When the “Landvik-group” reached port in New Orleans in January 1847, they had completed the first leg of their passage to the New World. They had met and mastered adverse weather and rather cramped conditions on their way from Grimstad to New Orleans, but on the whole their voyage had been relatively calm and uneventful. A child had been born, little Izette, and there was romance in the air between Peder Kalvehaven’s daughter and a Prussian officer. Peder Kalvehaven had found time to study his little English primer, and there had possibly been contacts with the German emigrants travelling on the same ship.

As the Boston-based *Izette* approached the Mississippi estuary, one can only guess what emotions and thoughts raced through the minds of the 80-strong Norwegian company. It is probable that they were still in doubt as to where they were actually heading, Texas, Missouri, and Wisconsin must have been candidates in the prolonged debate still going on within the group. They were so late in arriving in New Orleans that Johan Reinert Reiersen had given up hope of seeing them, and had returned to his settlement in Texas. The newly-arrived immigrants, on the other hand, made no advances and took no contact with the Norwegians in Texas. Their early letters reveal that they still harboured a deep sense of respect for the pathfinder and guide, his book was definitely essential to them, and they trusted his information. Although the leaders of the group were conspicuously silent about their personal relationship with Reiersen, it seems reasonable to assume that this relationship had soured after he had left Norway, possibly because of the smear campaigns and the legal actions taken against him. From a factual point of view, there exists no trace of any sort of communication between Reiersen and the “Landvik-group” after they embarked on their journey. What remains is Elise Wærenskjold’s rather bitter comment that they did not even bother to write. It would, however, take six weeks before the group was ready to move on and reveal what conclusion they had worked out during the winter.

They were about to face the harsh realities of life in New Orleans, they had burnt their bridges with little hope of return to Norway, and apart from struggling with the decision of where to head, they must have been caught in the existential dilemma about the validity and soundness of their choice to start a new life in America. Basically, the motivation to emigrate with their families had been based on the worries linked to the uncertain future prospects for their children, but also elements of personal economic troubles, political dissatisfaction, and, on the positive side, a personal surplus of energy connected to unfulfilled dreams. In addition,

they were mostly landowning peasants, in a position to sell their assets and thereby finding the necessary capital to finance the exodus. It may be that practical matters dominated the minds of the immigrants on this day in January, and would continue to do so for quite a long period of time. But in the back of their minds, an uncertainty about their coming destiny must have grown. Would the *Promised Land* prove to be a better place than their homely *Canaan*? Would other local emigrants follow? Was their settlement going to be a transplanted Landvik Parish? Were they going to retain their bonds with family and friends in Norway? Would they remain Norwegian in a sea of other nationalities? Or, would they sever all ties and be swallowed by the surrounding American culture? One can hardly expect the immigrants to have had any clear answers to these questions. Perhaps life just rolled on, weaving its web around this small group of newcomers, and leaving them with bitter memories of belonging and identity?

8.2 HEADING FOR MISSOURI

When the “Landvik-group” went onboard the steamer which was to take them north on the Mississippi in April, 1847, they had evidently used their stay in New Orleans to come to a decision regarding their final destination. It is uncertain why they turned their back on Johan R. Reiersen and his Texan colony; one may only guess that relations had soured, and that the prospects of a new life in Missouri were brighter and more tempting. The smear campaign conducted by Reiersen’s adversaries in Norway had possibly been a success – particularly in the sense that the former editor had become a burden and a strain for the prospective emigrants from Hommedal Parish. Their departure from New Orleans then marks the end of the affair. They did not make any contact with the Norwegians in Texas, did not explain to Reiersen why they had abandoned the idea of settling with his group, and certainly caused bitter feelings with the core people in *Four Mile Prairie*.

The whole process of making the decision to head north must indeed have been a complex one. It seems certain that they saw three possibilities: Texas, Wisconsin, or Missouri. The moment Reiersen had been eliminated from the deliberation, the political and military situation between Texas and Mexico seems finally to have swayed the Norwegians in the direction of the states to the north.

Texas was at this time an independent state, but was entangled in border disputes with Mexico. A series of battles and campaigns in what has been known as the Mexican-American War brought in troop movements and war supplies to the doorstep of New Orleans in the

spring of 1847. Two major battles were fought in February and March that year, at Buena Vista (February 22-23) and Vera Cruz (March 9-29).¹

General Santa Anna, President of Mexico, had assembled an army of 15,000 men at Son Luia Potosi in northern Mexico, and attacked the American forces under Major General Zachary Taylor near Saltillo. Taylor redeployed his men at Buena Vista which offered better possibilities for defending their positions and after two days of severe fighting the Mexican forces withdrew, having lost 1,500-2,000 soldiers.

At Vera Cruz one month later, General Scott led an amphibious landing with superior forces, and after a siege and a demoralizing bombardment, General Morales surrendered. Losses had been slight on both the Mexican and the American side; the Americans suffered about 80 casualties.

It is a fact that the Norwegian settlements in Texas were well outside the war zone. Detailed geographical knowledge of the state and the movements of the war are of course of less importance in such a situation. New Orleans must have been buzzing with rumours about the war, and the very sight of troops on their way to the west, combined with an excited and nervous atmosphere, certainly impressed the immigrants and may have made Texas a less inviting prospect.

At the same time as negative sentiments and the impact of the vicissitudes of war had tipped the balance in favour of revised plans, leaving out Texas, the "Landvik-group" experienced a split in the company when about 15 of the immigrants set off, heading for Norwegian settlements in Wisconsin where they counted on meeting family and acquaintances from their home district. In this connection, Wisconsin represented a safe solution, thousands of Scandinavians were constantly on the move along the trail towards the west, settling in homogeneous colonies, and founding "daughter" settlements in their search for cheaper and better land. For the remaining 50 immigrants in New Orleans, the future had a different content and direction. It is fair to assume that they knew about the failures to establish Norwegian settlements in Missouri, and although Reiersen had put the state in his top three settlement areas, the determination to go for Missouri points in the direction of other positive factors which in sum pulled the "Landvik-group" off the Mississippi River onto the Missouri River and into the northwestern corner of the frontier state. The immigrants have left no record of the deliberations which brought them to Buchanan County, and therefore the

¹ *Named Campaigns of the Mexican-American War*, <http://www.mymexicanwar.com/campaign.htm> (Accessed July 10, 2007).

following factors represent a string of circumstantial evidence which might suggest an answer to the question of “why”?

8.2.1 A GERMAN BAIT?

The Norwegian and German group travelled in separate quarters on the *Izette*, but it seems improbable that they were sealed off with no contact or access to the sharing of information. If such contacts were established, it may also be that German guidebooks were brought forth and compared to their Norwegian counterparts, e.g. Reiersen’s *Pathfinder*. There is in particular one German book which influenced a major part of German emigration, and which was based on experiences in German settlements in Missouri: Gottfried Duden’s *Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America*, first printed in 1829.²

Duden’s *Report* was a success among German emigrants, both because of its literary qualities and the idyllic descriptions of farming in Missouri. It attracted thousands of Germans to the state, and they followed Duden’s meticulous advice on clearing, fencing, and harvesting. He was eminently pro-emigration, even biased, since he was in a position to hire help on his Missouri farm, a fact which in turn made his view of farming more idyllic than practical.³ His followers were in many cases would-be gentlemen who met with a surprise when a farmer’s life turned out to be far more strenuous than expected.

When Duden purchased his farm in Warren County, he was in a position to observe and write, although his observations tended to give a romanticized version of immigrant life. His followers, often referred to as *Latin farmers*, came to play a more important role as cultural initiators than forerunners in agriculture. As the sobriquet indicates, “they were more proficient in the classics than in agriculture.”⁴

Duden’s report, combined with political unrest in the 1830s, inspired the formation of several emigration societies, often composed of intellectuals and people from the upper classes. Three such associations deserve mentioning: the Berlin Society, the Solingen group, and the Giessen Society. Headed by rather imposing characters like Friedrich Muench, Gert Goebel, and Hermann and Friedrich Steines, the various groups of Germans headed west from St. Louis and established themselves in “little Germanies” on the Missouri River, in Franklin, St. Charles, Warren, Gasconade and Osage Counties. By 1870, Germans constituted a

² James W. Goodrich, general editor, with George H. Kellner, Elsa Nagel, Adolf E. Schroeder, and W.M. Senner, eds. and translators. *Report on a Journey to the Western States of North America and a Stay of Several Years Along the Missouri (During the Years 1824, '25, '26, and 1827)* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1980). <http://www.press.umsystem.edu/otherbooks/duden.htm> (Accessed July 10, 2007).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Kamphoefner, op. cit.: 94.

majority of the population in most of these counties.⁵ On the whole, the German influence in the state was considerable, in 1850 one third of the population in St. Louis was of German stock,⁶ and even remoter St. Joseph had a solid contingent: “The German-Americans have been prominently identified with the history and development of St. Joseph from an early day”.⁷

Should the Norwegians onboard the *Izette* have overcome linguistic difficulties and become familiar with German emigrants and their written pathfinders, it is not unlikely that the very positive – even exuberant – presentation of the state of Missouri was put down as yet another asset in the weighing of alternatives. Towards the end of their stay in New Orleans, the arrival of a legendary regiment from the war in Mexico tipped the scales another inch, and boosted both heroism and the Missouri reputation.

8.2.2 VICTORIOUS MISSOURIANS

In the early summer of 1846, Alexander Doniphan had led a band of volunteers from Missouri down south and into the fighting on the Mexican border. The First Regiment of Missouri Volunteers helped conquer the Mexicans at Santa Fe, continued through the desert to confront a larger Mexican force at El Paso, defeated the Mexicans at El Brazito, and slaughtered many Mexicans without losing one man.⁸ After capturing El Paso, the Missourians reportedly enjoyed both the women and food in the town before they headed for Chihuahua and another victory in early March. An exhausting struggle across 600 miles of heavy terrain followed, before Doniphan and his regiment joined the American troops at Buena Vista. At that moment they decided against re-enlisting, and voted to go home. When they reached New Orleans, they had secured themselves national hero worship.

When Doniphan and his band continued on their home journey in June 1847, people all along the Mississippi River celebrated their accomplishments. The Missourians had marched over 2,000 miles and defeated superior enemy forces, only losing four of their own men. Their military feat has been called “the last great chapter in Missouri’s frontier lore”.⁹

Is it likely that the people in the “Landvik group” were influenced by these Missouri heroes? If the answer is a tentative “yes”, then it is of course a conjecture. It is, however,

⁵ Ibid.: 96-97.

⁶ Howard R. Lamar, ed. *The New Encyclopedia of the American West* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998): 719.

⁷ Chris L. Rutt. *History of Buchanan County and the City of St. Joseph and Representative Citizens, 1826-1904* (Chicago, IL: Biographical Publishing Company, 1904): 236.

⁸ Paul C. Nagel. *Missouri: A History* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1977): 11.

⁹ Ibid.: 11-12.

reasonable to assume that the festivities and the celebrations taking place at the arrival of Doniphan and his men might have lifted the cloud of war, and perhaps placed Missouri in a favourable and attractive light, also among the settlers.

8.2.3 A JEFFERSONIAN ARCADIA

In Johan Reinert Reiersen's report to his sponsors, Platte and Osage Counties are listed among the locations most suitable for settlement.¹⁰ Buchanan County is not mentioned at all, but then Reiersen's journey through parts of Missouri had been a quick one, and did not allow him to go into a detailed description of the state. While the name Buchanan County does not appear in Reiersen's text, this is perhaps of little importance, since Platte County is situated directly to the south of Buchanan, and Andrew and Holt Counties (mentioned later) are found in the neighbouring region to the north. The conclusion is that the "Landvik-group" in one sense did follow Reiersen's advice and ended up in an area between three of his chosen locations.

Platte County is characterized as a county with a wealth of springs, streams, and rivers. The fertile land is a mixture of prairie and woodland, and the landscape is beautiful. The intelligent and prosperous inhabitants have given the area "a reputation unsurpassed by that of any other region in the whole state."¹¹ Reiersen then goes on to point out two specific locations for a Norwegian settlement, in Andrew and Holt Counties, both having an advantageous position near the Missouri River and in the vicinity of a town. Of special interest for the farmers are the crops cultivated for sale, viz. hemp and tobacco.

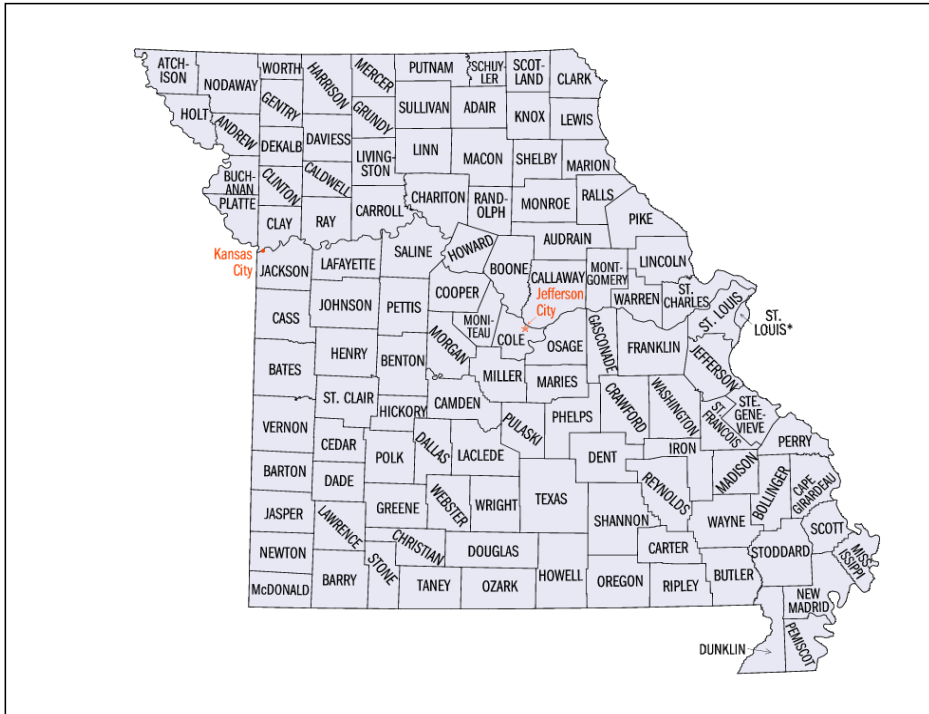
Reiersen admits that he was too hurried to be able to describe in detail every location, and therefore his assessment of Osage County is very short. It is also characterized by a number of streams and rivers, there is a combination of prairie and woodland, livestock farming is common, and the main crops consist of hemp, tobacco, and some cotton.

In all, the Missouri counties constitute a region which is healthful and well suited for settlement. The land is fertile with a good balance between prairie and woodland, and with a somewhat unfamiliar offering of "southern" crops, hemp, tobacco, and cotton. For settlers well read and acquainted with American agricultural practises, such crops might be a reminder of the use of slave labour in some states.

¹⁰ *Pathfinder*: 213-214.

¹¹ *Ibid.*: 214.

The “Landvik-group” would spend six weeks in New Orleans, making a living and coping with unfamiliar conditions, waiting for the spring thaw, but definitely also preparing for the stage of their journey. After all, they were “uncommonly well educated”, and it seems



The Missouri Counties. http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/maps/missouri_map.html (Accessed July 10, 2007)

improbable that men like Osul Enge and Peder Kalvehaven did not take the opportunity to investigate and consider the options they were facing. If Missouri already was their chosen location, they must have been eager to collect information and get a general picture of the state which was to become their new home. In the case that they were still wavering between several options, positive descriptions and information targeted at their own special view of a farmer’s life, might still tip the balance.

After her admission to the Union in 1821, Missouri in many respects came to play the role as a defender of old virtues in the economy and social life. Even though the state was spearheading the thrust towards the west, a majority of the Missourians would advocate ideas attributed to Thomas Jefferson: limited government, agrarianism, and the dangers of money

and banking.¹² In their ideal society of sturdy farmers, the future was secured by the influence of free citizens who held positions through widespread ownership of land. Society relied upon a subsistence agriculture, where farmers were independent and suffered the least interference from government officials. “Government was best when it functioned least”, to repeat one of Jefferson’s ideas. On the background of such attitudes, Missourians came to fear taxes, banks, government interference and the cities. In fact, many would predict that Missouri was the state where vices like greed, corruption, and poverty might be overcome through the workings of free citizens and the inspiration of the surrounding version of their local Arcadia.¹³

Senator Thomas Hart Benton fought for and followed the Jefferson tradition, even to the point of obsession.¹⁴ Throughout his life on the political scene, he came to represent the spirit of caution, still embedded in the term the “show-me” state. He celebrated the victories in the American-Mexican War, and also maintained that slavery must not extend because of those triumphs. He was met with fierce opposition in this matter, and Claiborne F. Jackson and his sympathizers succeeded in passing resolutions in the General Assembly which cemented pro-slavery views.¹⁵ In 1849, Benton travelled intensely in Missouri, speaking against slavery expansion, but was defeated in the elections, and ended his long career in the Senate in 1851.

In his defence of traditional Missouri values, Benton came to represent a society where citizens lived contently “in simplicity and independence amid nature’s inspiration.”¹⁶ His admirers were to a great extent small farmers “rejoicing in free and cautious government.”¹⁷

In such a perspective, the leaders of the “Landvik-group” must have become aware of the connection and the contrast between the political system in their home country and their prospective new home. They had been in opposition to a system where government officials had interfered in all walks of life, and had elevated themselves to positions of crucial importance. Politically oriented peasants still had a long way to go before they could oust these civil servants, and take over political functions. Taxes and fees had always been a burden for them, and their caution in economic affairs had not been sufficiently appreciated, they felt. By contrast, the state of Missouri stood forth like a fulfilment of their dreams and

¹² Paul C. Nagel. *Missouri: A History* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1977): 102.

¹³ *Ibid.*: 103.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*: 109.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*: 116.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*: 118.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

aspirations. Here was a society which gave hard-working farmers their due place, encouraged individual freedom at the expense of state interference, put little weight on taxes and levies, and offered newcomers ample, cheap, and fertile land.

On April 1, 1847, they left New Orleans, and braced themselves for the final stage.

8.2.4 THE MYSTERIOUS WEDDLES

The nucleus of the “Landvik-group”, still 50 strong, had packed all their belongings, including Peder Kalvehaven’s two big wheels, and would for the next two weeks be travelling along the major waterways of the Middle West. A steamer brought them up the Mississippi to St. Louis, where they changed to the *Old Hickory*, a flat-bottomed steamer, built to navigate shallow waters, but like other vessels on the *Old Muddy* always sailing with the threat of snags, sandbanks, and the constant danger of boiler explosions.

Before they reached their destination, Anders Nielsen Holte had to part with yet another member of his ill-fated family. His four-year-old daughter Oriella Bergette died onboard the steamer, and was buried near Weston. By a heavy blow of ill luck, Anders had buried his wife and two children in American soil even before the family had settled in the new land. Apart from this tragic incident, they had a calm journey, and two letters from Osul Enge and Peder Kalvehaven give some few details about the passage.

We left New Orleans together on April 1. the following year: myself, Peder Kalvehaven, Osul Løvåsen, Anders Holte, Lars Stensvand, Ole Konnestad, Astri Østerhus, Simon Kålåsen, Torjus Hardeberg, Kristen Bjellandslien, as we were all heading for Missouri. Others in the company had gone to Wisconsin, and some had travelled in advance to seek work. We came to the township of St. Joseph on April 14., same year, which was about 1,800 miles from New Orleans, and we are now living in the vicinity. Several people told us along the way that the land around St. Joseph was one of the best places in Missouri to settle in order to get good land and a good market which I believe to be true.¹⁸

Having stayed for 2 ½ months in New Orleans, we packed our belongings on April 1., with most of our company to go by steamboat to Missouri, and after having covered 1,900 miles, we arrived on the 14., the following month at St. Joseph in

¹⁸ Osul Nielsen Enge, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 1.

*Missouri, the four-year-old town by the [Missouri] river, which from the river looks really nice, it is situated at 40 degrees north, and the steamboat did not go any further at that time, and we were not inclined to go any further, particularly since there is not another town on the river for 150 miles.*¹⁹

The two accounts are short and do not give any details about the journey into the north-western corner of Missouri. We are left with family tradition to fill in the gaps, and introduce a Danish aristocrat, Augustus Vedel (or Weddle in America), who had settled in St. Joseph with his son Frederick and a male servant.²⁰ Wrote Osul Enge: “Here were no Norwegians in the neighbourhood, only a Dane had arrived in the fall before we came.”²¹

While in Weston, Peder Kalvehaven went to a local storekeeper, a Norwegian by the name of Knudsen, to have his watch repaired. The watch bore an inscription and the storekeeper was able to identify the watchmaker as an old acquaintance in Norway. He also told Peder Kalvehaven that the land north of Weston, in the Blacksnake Hills, was undulating and quite easy to farm. A townsite had been platted a short time earlier, and there were fewer than 1,000 people in the settlement. According to Mr. Knudsen, a Danish gentleman and his son with an Icelandic servant had arrived the previous fall.²²

On their arrival at *Roubidoux's Landing* in St. Joseph, Mr. Weddle was waiting for them with an ox-cart. He invited the Kalvehaven family to load their luggage on to the cart, and invited them to stay with him in his house until they had found suitable accommodation. They stored their bulky luggage in the basement of *Whitefield & Ingefelt* without charge, and were then driven in Mr. Weddle's wagon to the farm. They remained there a week, before they rented a house at *Dug Cut*, family tradition tells. Before the end of the summer, Peder Kalvehaven and all the other Norwegians had found land, except some of the bachelors who

¹⁹ Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 6.*

²⁰ Frank G. Nelson (with the possible assistance of Nora C. Nelson) has investigated the role of the Weddles, particularly in relation to Peder Kalvehaven. In a letter to Catherine Nelson, St. Joseph, in January, 1986, he writes that he is enclosing a scratch-copy of a talk he gave at an emigration seminar in Oslo in 1984. He goes on to state that “I’ve long suspected that great-grandfather’s [Peder Kalvehaven] meeting with August ‘Wedel’ in St. Joseph was no accident, but it wasn’t until a couple of years ago that the pieces of the story began to fall into place – after I discovered that August was the brother-in-law of Reiersen’s old enemy Chief of Police Pedersen in Kristiansand.” Use of material by courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO.

²¹ Osul Nielsen Enge, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 1.*

²² Information from notes left by Nora C. Nelson. By courtesy of Morton Nelson, St. Joseph, MO.

joined the army for a period. They had roofs over their heads for the coming winter, and were ready to plant their first crops in the spring.

On the basis of his investigation of the Weddle family background, Frank G. Nelson has communicated the story that Frederick Weddle, on his deathbed, admitted to his family that his real name was Claussen, not Vedel/ Weddle, and that he had been educated at the Danish court. His father, however, quarrelled with King Christian VIII over some matter connected to the situation in Schleswig-Holstein, and had been thrown out of the court. He had joined his father in coming to Missouri, and they had left behind August's wife and two children. In the early 1900s, Frederick's daughters visited Copenhagen, and found relatives there who confirmed this tale, according to Frank G. Nelson's manuscript.

His research in Danish archives led to the discovery of the true identity of the mysterious Mr. Weddle, and thereby supplied an important piece in the puzzle why the "Landvik-group" turned their back on Johan Reinert Reiersen, and headed for Missouri.

August Weddle's real name was August Carl Emil Claussen, born in Tønder, Denmark, in 1795. It is unclear why he was expelled from the court in Copenhagen, and Frank G. Nelson has not succeeded in finding links to the several Claussen families involved in political disputes at the time of King Christian VIII. It is plausible that the dispute was a personal thing, the kind of quarrel which could be kept hidden from public scandal. His wife, Charlotte Amalie, had family bonds on both sides of the Skagerrak, and had every interest in covering a possible scandal. Her brother held the office of Chief of Police in Kristiansand, and Hans Tybring Pedersen had often been involved in heated disputes with Johan Reinert Reiersen.

It is possible that August Weddle had been in contact with Peder Kalvehaven before the latter left New Orleans, or perhaps even Norway. In other words, their meeting in St. Joseph was no coincidence, and it stands to reason that Mr Weddle in fact had suggested Missouri as a suitable place for settlement. If this suggestion dated back before the departure from Norway, Peder Kalvehaven must have had a hidden agenda, steering his company in a direction they might, or might not have been fully aware of. On the other hand, choosing Missouri was not a radical decision; after all the state had been on their list of well-suited locations, and the moment Reiersen's Texas was out of the competition, the northern route offered itself smoothly.

August Weddle got to Missouri first, and once there he would have become acquainted with the excellent and available land. Also, there was the advantage of being the farthest west steamboat terminal in the United States. But how the two men had originally come to know each other, one can only guess.

It is likely that some mutual acquaintance, unaware of the hostilities between Reiersen and the Chief of Police, may have unknowingly suggested that the two migrants take advantage of the fact that they were both in America. It follows that the moment the Chief of Police learned that his brother-in-law was about to get involved in Reiersen's emigration plans, he surely would spread a warning to August Weddle about the doubtful sides of the editor's character. This may then be the origin of the breakdown of the relations between Reiersen and his old friends in the "Landvik-group", according to Frank G. Nelson.

It is wholly unclear if the people of the "Landvik-group" knew the reasons for August Weddle's move to Missouri; they were at least aware of his desire for discrete anonymity, since there is hardly a mention of him in the letters preserved, with the exception of Osul Enge's short remark already mentioned. None of the other letters from the pioneers, written over many years, name either August or his son Frederick's marriage to Peder Kalvehaven's daughter, Maren Christine. To what extent, if at all, August Weddle's association with the Missouri settlers was to blame for their failure to write to their countrymen in Texas and inform them of their changed plans, is probably a mystery which will never quite be deciphered. Frank G. Nelson's effort to cast light over the mysterious affair is, however, an important contribution to the understanding of the complex considerations and the often unclear sentiments which are embedded in the process of leading a group of migrants, and finding a new home across the seas.

CHAPTER IX:

**THE SETTLEMENT IN ST. JOSEPH,
MISSOURI**

9.1 ROUBIDOUX'S LANDING

When the Norwegian company went ashore in St. Joseph, at *Roubidoux's Landing*, in the north-western corner of the state of Missouri, the little town had close to 1,000 inhabitants. It had been founded in 1842, only five years before the arrival of the "Landvik-group". The founder was a French fur-trader named Joseph Roubidoux. He had since he was 16, traded with the Indians who had their hunting grounds along the Missouri River. Already in 1826, Roubidoux had got himself a flat-bottomed ferry to serve the fur-traders and the Indians across the swift and muddy river marking the border between Missouri and the Kansas territory. A favourable ferry landing was therefore the cornerstone of the rapidly growing town, and it was soon to become an important junction for immigrants and settlers who were crossing the continent on their way to California, Oregon, and Colorado, both before and after 1850.

1843	200
1845	600
1846	800
1850	3,460
1860	8,932

Table 9.1: Population in St. Joseph, Missouri, 1843-1869.¹

Peder Kalvehaven and his group had made a good choice. They had come to an area consisting largely of rolling prairies with fairly high bluffs along the river (ancient holy ground for the Native Americans), and the land was well-watered and well-drained. The deep loess soil had practically no stones, and the occasional copses had sufficient trees for fences and firewood. The river steamers linked the area with markets as far away as St. Louis, Pittsburgh, and New Orleans.

The settlers arrived, too, at an opportune time. Northwest Missouri, the so-called Platte Purchase, had been opened to settlers a decade before the "Landvik-group" arrived. The infrastructure of state and local government was in place and the roads cleared and marked. In 1847, much of the land had already been taken by frontiersmen, who would be restless and moving in considerable numbers towards Oregon, abandoning their claims and selling them cheaply. Sometimes these partially cultivated farms would have rather crude cabins which the new immigrants bought, either to use the timber, or to move the little house to another place and eventually extend and improve it.

St. Joseph became an increasingly important starting point for the westward journey: it provided ferry transportation across the "Old Muddy", and was able to furnish the wagon trains with sufficient provisions. It has been estimated that 350,000 settlers crossed into the

¹ Sheridan A. Logan. *Old St. Jo: Gateway to the West, 1799-1932* (St. Joseph, MO: Platte Purchase Publishers, 1983: 26.

new territories in the period 1841-1866. A large portion of this multitude of new settlers travelled via St. Joseph, and of course helped boost the local economy.

Table 9.2: Estimated migration towards the Pacific Territories, 1841-1866.²

Year	Estimated number, migrants	Year	Estimate	Year	Estimate
1841	100	1850	55,000	1859	30,000
1842	200	1851	10,000	1860	15,000
1843	1,000	1852	50,000	1861	5,000
1844	2,000	1853	20,000	1862	5,000
1845	5,000	1854	10,000	1863	10,000
1846	1,000	1855	5,000	1864	20,000
1847	2,000	1856	5,000	1865	25,000
1848	4,000	1857	5,000	1866	25,000
1849	30,000	1858	10,000	Sum =	350,000

Joseph Roubidoux had filed his plats for the new town on the Missouri, 250 miles west of St. Louis, his native city. He was, however, not the first white man to explore the area. A French fur trader, Etienne de Bourgmont, had recorded a description of the future township in 1714, and other Frenchmen followed, among them Roubidoux who made his first journey into the area in 1799. He became popular with the Indians, spoke their language, and his trading post became a favourite gathering spot for several tribes, especially the Sac and the Osage. John James Audubon, the naturalist, travelled along the Missouri on his way to the Yellowstone region in May, 1843, and described the Roubidoux settlement and the Blacksnake Hills in his diary:

After grounding on sandbars and contending against headwinds and currents, we reached the Blacksnake Hills settlement which is a delightful site for a populous city. The hills are two hundred feet above the level of the river, and slope gently down on the other side, to the beautiful prairies that extend over the thousands of acres of the richest land imaginable.³

² Merrill M. Mates. *The Great Platte River Road* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969): 23.

³ Letter to his family, May 5, 1843; Sarah Boehme et al. *John James Audubon in the West: The Last Expedition. Mammals of North America* (New York: Harr Association with Cody, Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 2000): 84.

In 1803, the United States Government had negotiated the purchase of the Louisiana territory from France. It was a vast region, largely unmapped, and in 1804, President Thomas Jefferson sent out a military expedition led by Lewis and Clark to explore the territory. The expedition passed through the future St. Joseph, to them known as St. Michael's Prairie, and also camped there on their return in 1806. Lewis and Clark opened the way for American fur traders and gradual settlement. The earliest settlements were established along the two great rivers, the Mississippi and the Missouri. During the 1820s and 1830s, the pioneer settlements were dominated by Americans from Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky, as well as settlers from England, Ireland, and Germany.

The admission of Missouri to the Union came after a long debate, ending in the so-called *Missouri Compromise*. The compromise "balanced" two new states, Maine (a free state) and Missouri (a slave state). When Missouri was accepted as the 24th state of the Union in 1821, the present-day northwest region was not included in the state. This was called the Platte territory, held by the Sac and Fox tribes. In 1837, however, the Government negotiated with the Indians for the purchase of two million acres of land; St. Joseph and Buchanan County were part of the *Platte Purchase*. The Indians received \$7,500 and a reservation across the river in Kansas.

In 1845, the *Gazette*, the local newspaper printed one short article and a letter, both describing the area the Norwegians would settle about two years later.⁴

There are 12 large mercantile establishments, 3 hotels, with a host of mechanics of all trades. As yet there is only 1 small church, but it is expected that 3 temples will be erected to the Living God this summer, a Methodist, a Presbyterian, and a Catholic church. ... Most of the ready money of the farmers has been taken for the last years to pay for their land, the county is very new, and sufficiently large farms are not yet open, and for the last two years crops have failed almost entirely.

The principal shipments from St. Joseph are hemp and tobacco. ... The soil in every direction from the town is remarkable for its most exuberant fertility; and it only needs an industrious and enterprising population to render it one of the most magnificent agricultural districts in the western country.

⁴ The *Gazette*, March, 1845 and June, 1845; St. Joseph Central Library, St. Joseph, MO.

Joseph Roubidoux hired Simeon Kemper and Frederick Smith to plan his new town. Kemper advocated broad and tree-lined avenues, but Roubidoux favoured Smith's vision of a compact town with narrow streets. The east-west streets were then named after his wife and more or less legitimate children: Angélique, Faraon, Jules, Francis, Felix, Edmond, Charles, Sylvaine, and Messanie.

When gold was discovered in California in 1848, St. Joseph soon found itself in the midst of a tumultuous movement, taking gold rushers across the Missouri, and competing with Independence as the major jumping-off point. Some estimates maintain that 50,000 gold seekers passed through in 1849. This established St. Joseph as a boom town, and the future development of the area and the increase of the population (52,324 inhabitants in 1890), characterized the area until the 20th century when recession began. There were several milestones in the era, emphasizing the dynamic prospects of the town; until the Civil War, St. Joseph was the westernmost point accessible by train, the Pony Express was started here in 1860, a telephone exchange was set up in 1879, electric street cars were introduced in 1887, the town authorities worked for and hoped to be the site of a future World's Fair (they were eventually ousted by St. Louis), and the meatpacking industry was established as the backbone of the local economy.⁵

9.2 THE SETTLERS

On April 14, 1847, the remaining 52 immigrants from the "Landvik-group" stepped ashore at *Roubidoux's Landing* in Buchanan County, Missouri, 207 days after they had boarded the *Grethe Lovise* in the little port of Grimstad. When they reached New Orleans, there were 80 Norwegians onboard the *Izette*. 12 of those died during the stay in New Orleans, one little girl died on the Mississippi, and 15 immigrants had gone on to Wisconsin or other parts of the United States.

They constituted a traditional group of pioneer immigrants, following the pattern of similar groups from other parts of Norway in the early stages of migration to America. There were eight families in the company with a total of 35 children. The husbands were all farmers, with the exception of Bent Hansen Molland who was a shoemaker. Anders Nielsen Holte and Bent Hansen Molland were widowers. Both had lost their wives due to illness in New Orleans. Astri Lunden Østerhus was a widow; her husband had also succumbed to illness on arrival in America. The nucleus of the group was made up of seasoned and experienced

⁵ Historical details based upon: Robert Slater and Jackie Lewin, St. Joseph Museum Inc. *Exciting past: Promising Future*, <http://www.stjomo.com/history/history1.htm> (Accessed July 17, 2007).

peasants, with an average age among the men of 45 years. The oldest man among these peasants was Lars Haaversen Stensvand, who was 65 years old on arrival in St. Joseph. The wives in the company averaged 44 years. Karen Marthea, Peder Kalvehaven's wife, was the senior woman: she was 53 years old.

A group of four younger bachelors who averaged 23 years of age were all farm workers, and constituted a sort of satellite to the major group; they were seemingly less attached to the cultivation of the soil and lacked some of the hunger for land shown by the older settlers. They were also slower in settling down, and most of them quite soon took service in the army. When the gold rush started in California, some of them were also in a position which allowed them for a period to follow other gold seekers to the west, before they returned to the settlement in Missouri.

Counting also the children in the group, the composition demonstrates the usual distribution between men and women in the early phase of immigration: 56% and 44% respectively. It should of course be noted that the small size of the "Landvik-group" makes any statistical conclusion difficult and perhaps of little weight.

The following survey states the 52 names of the settlers of the "Landvik-group" who arrived on April 14, 1847. It is based upon the 1850 Census Returns for Buchanan County, Missouri, *Letters from the Pioneers* (Part Three), and the *Index* (Part Four):

Osul Nielsen Enge (1802 – 1880); a farmer from Eide Parish;
 married to Gunhild Terjesdatter Håland (1804 – 1867)
 Aase (1827 - 1903)
 Gurine (1829 - 1907)
 Maren (1831 - 1902)
 Trine (1834 - 1868)
 Terje (Tyra) (1839 - 1919)
 Nels Gustav (1846 - 1929)

Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven (1794 – 1884); a farmer (and boatbuilder) from Eide Parish;
 married to Karen Marthea Olsdatter Bjerke (1794 – 1875)
 Aasille Elise (1826 - 1873)
 Nels (Niels) Peter (1829 - 1888)
 Jørgen A. (George) (1830 - 1903)
 Olava (Olave) (Laura) (1832 - 1921)
 Maren Christine (1834 - 1913)

Anders Nielsen Holte (1809 – 1887); a farmer from Birkenes Parish;
 married to Gjertrud Ommundsdatter Espægren (1814 – 1847), died in New Orleans
 (later married Anne Ivarsdatter Lunden; emigrated 1850)
 Grete Marie (1842 - 1919)

Nels Olaus (1844 - 1922)

Osul Andersen Løvaasen (1797 – 1869); a farmer from Herefoss Parish;
 married to Maren Nilsdatter Iglund (1796 – 1880)
 Anders (1823 - 1886)
 Nels (1826 - 1907)
 Gunder (1828 - 1906)
 Gunborg (1832 - 1894)
 Osul (1837 - 1905)
 Peder (1841 - ?)

Lars Haaversen Stensvand (1782 – 1869); a farmer from Birkenes Parish;
 married to Kristianne Kittelsdatter Slettene (1797 – 1883)
 Kiedel (Kittel)Tobias (1819 - 1892)
 Haaver (Hover) (1822 - 1901)
 Christian (1825 – ca. 1850); served in the Army shortly after arrival
 Johannes (1829 - 1902)
 Andreas Arup (1832 - 1881)
 Inger Tomine (1838 - 1927)

Ole Halvorsen Konnestad (1816 -); a farmer from Fjære Parish;
 married to Karen (Cathrine?) Clemmetsdatter (1819 -)
 Karen (?)
 Alette (1847-)

Astri Lunden Østerhus (1804 -); a farmer's wife from Birkenes Parish;
 married to Knut Haaversen Østerhus (1806 – 1847), died in New Orleans; a farmer
 from Birkenes parish
 Helmer (Hjalmar) (1836 -)
 Ivar (Edward) (1839 -)
 Ole Nicolai (1841 -)
 Anne Kristine (1844 - 1878)

Bent Hansen Molland (1810 -); a shoemaker from Landvik Parish;
 married to Trone Løvorsdatter (1802 – 1847), died in New Orleans
 Ingeborg (1834 -)
 Octave (1836 -)
 Mathilda (1839 -)
 Bergetta (1844 - 1924)

Simon Simonsen Kulaasen (1826 -); a farmer/ farmworker from Øyestad Parish;
 a bachelor.

Torjus Gundersen Hardeberg (1827 -); a farmer/ farm worker from Landvik Parish; known
 as Torjes Harrabor; a bachelor; served in the army shortly after arrival.

Kristen Bjellandslien (or: Halvorsen Hellern) (1821 -); a farmer/ farm worker from Øyestad
 Parish; a bachelor; served in the army shortly after arrival.

Lars Nielsen Håbesland (1822 – 1866); a farmer from Birkenes Parish; known as Lewis Nelson; a bachelor; served in the army shortly after arrival.

9.3 A CHAIN MIGRATION

The Federal Census for Missouri in 1850, listed 155 Norwegians out of a total population of ca. 680,000, a mere 0.02%. Ten years later, according to the Census Returns, the Norwegian settlement had diminished to 146, whereas the state population had grown to 1,067,081 inhabitants, with an estimated slave population of 114,900.⁶ This was a time when the new territory in Kansas had been opened for settlement, and quite a number of settlers in Buchanan County had crossed the Missouri into Doniphan County, Kansas. An attempt at an accurate counting of the number of Norwegian immigrants, based on several sources, shows, however, that the number of settlers grew from 52 in 1847, to 171 in 1850, and to 194 in 1855.⁷

In the years from 1847 until 1855, new groups of relatives and friends added to the Norwegian colony in Buchanan County, bringing the number of *Igland* related settlers in the county up to 194. In many ways, this marked the apex of the Norwegian settlement in St. Joseph. After 1855 the influx of new immigrants from the old country faded out, the brevity of the growth of the settlement became clear, and when the Kansas territory was opened for settlement in the late 1850s, Osul Nelson and his closest kith and kin left Peder Nelson and his relatives to uphold a diminishing Norwegian colony to the southeast of St. Joseph. Writes Ole Nelson in 1858: “There are relatively few Norwegians left in the settlement, they have mostly moved to Kansas.”⁸

In the decade before the split of the settlement, however, the new groups of settlers came from the reservoir of potential emigrants who were in contact with the pioneers, received their letters, and undoubtedly enjoyed close relations within the *Igland* network, although the centre of movement shifted eastwards towards Tvedestrand and Holt Parish. The web of relatives and close friends was very much intact, and allowed few, if any, outsiders to join the migration to Missouri. New families arrived on the *Hermes* and the *Nordpolen* to New York in 1850, and they soon bought land along the Norwegian axis going south-east from St. Joseph into Washington and Centre Townships. By 1855 the last of the movers were in place, and after that only stray individuals headed for Missouri. Norwegian official records

⁶ Federal Census, Missouri, 1860. Paper version, St. Joseph Central Public Library; St. Joseph, MO.

⁷ Table 9.3.

⁸ Ole Nelson, 1858. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 5.

are scanty, and they only list 11 emigrants who gave Missouri as their destination in America in the period between 1860 and the turn of the century.⁹

As such, this process of chain migration was short-lived, but it all the same followed the “normal” pattern: the pioneers wrote letters home, their positive descriptions of the land and their experiences enticed potential emigrants within their network to follow them, and a new spread of information in turn brought new groups in the footsteps of the predecessors. Immigrant letters therefore were of vital importance to the continuation of the migration process, and, of course, personal contacts might even have a stronger influence. When Osul Nelson returned to Norway in 1871, on his one and only visit to his native country, he received the welcome of a hero, songs were written in his honour,¹⁰ and five new settlers followed him back to the United States, and he made sure they had a safe start with the Norwegians in the area:¹¹

I repeatedly express my thanks to you for the steadfast love I was met with in every respect, everywhere. I can also inform you that I in the company of other Norwegians returned happily and soundly to my home on September 14, though the journey lasted longer than on the crossing, we were 27 days on the way from Christiansand to my home, in stead of 21 days going to Norway. ... Ole and Mathias are with us, Osul Guttormsen with Johannes H. Stensvand, Aanon Kylland with the Løvaasen family, and Gerul Gjømle with Hans Nelson, my daughter Aase's husband.

The pioneers were also willing to buy land on behalf of prospective immigrants, although this might be an uncertain operation when the new settler was slow in turning up¹² :

More than a year ago I bought 320 acres or 2/4 sectioned land, meant to be for a certain Ole Tjæmsland, for which I paid 2,900 dollars. He was supposed to come here last summer, but I have not seen him yet, but if he does not come here to claim the land, I may sell it to others with a profit. It is extra good land with a house and som cultivated areas in addition.

The 1850 Census Returns for Buchanan County also recorded the Norwegian population, and the list is included here with all its misspellings and incomprehensible versions of Norwegian names. The names are grouped in families where possible, including

⁹ *Index, Part Four.*

¹⁰ *Letters from the Pioneers, Appendix D, Part Three.*

¹¹ Osul Nelson, 1871. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 5.*

¹² Osul Nelson, 1867. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 3.*

servants from outside the family printed with extra space. Heads of families are put in brackets with a “normal” Norwegian spelling. Numbers refer to registration in the Census Records. Geographically, the immigrants had settled in two areas to the southeast of St. Joseph: Washington and Centre Townships.

646 Clemmenson, Oula (47) (M) [Ole Klemmentsen Solberg]

Catharine (30) (F)

Tunis (17) (M)

Clemit (12) (M)

Laus (8) (M)

Materas (6) (M)

Lemon (14) (M?)

Izabek (4) (M)

Temena (2) (F)

647 Nelson, Oben (52) (M) (?)

Anne (35) (F)

Nelse (13) (M)

Purilda (12) (F)

Marian (10) (F)

Christa (6) (F)

Oula (4) (M)

Ulma (2) (F)

650 Dinnick, Olsen (28) (M) [Ole Mathias Dannevig]

Sarah (26) (F)

Peter (4) (M)

Mathias (1/2) (M)

654 Nelson, Peter (56) (M) [Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven]

Caven (55) (F)

Eliza (24) (F)

Nelson (22) (M)

George (20) (M)

Olava (19) (F)

Christine (17) (F)

Tunis Olson (16) (M)

- Nelse Nelson (12) (M)
- 655 Peters, James (25) (M) [James Pettis]
 Eliza (24) (F)
 Carey (1) (M)
 Catharine (1/2) (F)
- 656 Nelson, Ola (45) (M) [Ole Nielsen Rørmoen]
 Geena (40) (F)
 Orsela (9) (F)
 Christina (7) (F)
 Nelse (12) (M)
- 1116 Everson, Astra (48) (F) [Astri Haaversen Østerhus]
 Helma (14) (M)
 Eva (11) (M)
 Olda (9) (M)
 Anna (6) (F)
- Andrew Lockerson (59) (M)
 Evan Anderson (26) (M)
 Assea (13) (F)
- 1117 Johnson, Well (48) (M) (?)
 Caroline (28) (F)
 John (24) (M)
- Celia Haberson (18) (F)
- 1118 Thompson, Gunda (40) (M) [Gunder Guttormsen Thompsen]
 Jacobina (43) (F)
 Bratten (18) (F)
 Mary (14) (F)
 Thomas (16) (M)
 Michael (11) (M)
 Carlos (9) (M)
 Nelse (7) (M)
 Gueneas (4) (M)
 Mattalia (5) (F)

- 1119 Nelson, Osal (48) (M) [Osul Nielsen Enge]
 Grail (46) (F)
 Mary (18) (F)
 Levena (16) (F)
 Taria (11) (M)
 Nelse (4) (M)
 August (3/4) (M)
 Marion (32) (F)
 Hance (3) (M)
 Nichols (30) (M)
- Leverd Levernson (21) (M)
- 1120 Nelson, Lewis (28) (M) [Lars Nilsen Håbesland]
 Gerena (22) (F)
 Melia (1) (F)
- 1121 Thompson, Nelse (26) (M) [Nils Guttormsen Thompsen]
 Ingaback (29) (F)
 Osee (1) (F)
- 1122 Helverson, Ouley (30) (M) [Ole Halvorsen Konnestad]
 Catharine (26) (F)
 Elletta (4) (F)
 Henry (1) (M)
- Gustan Hawson (43) (M)
 Turban (8) (M)
 Orthan (1) (M)
- 1123 Anderson, Ansal (53) (M) [Osul Andersen Løvaasen]
 Moran (54) (F)
 Audes (26) (M)
 Nelse (24) (M)
 Gunda (22) (M)
 Gumba (18) (F)
 Orsal (13) (M)
 Peter (9) (M)

Gurten Pearson (16) (M)

1124 Pearson, Luse (68) (M) [Lars Haaversen Stensvand]

Christina (53) (F)

Kedel (32) (M)

Ove (29) (M)

Johannes (21) (M)

Andrias (20) (M)

Temeson (16) (F)

Bent (13) (M)

Helver Olson (73) (M)

1125 Nelson, Andse (35) (M) [Anders Nielsen Holte]

Gurte (7) (F)

Nelse (6) (M)

1126 Nelson, Oula (45) (M) [Ole Nielsen Lien]

Anna (43) (F)

Chardon (14) (M)

Peter (10) (M)

Orsa (7) (F)

Nelse (4) (M)

Cora Habeans (23) (F)

1127 Stenson, Oulester (57) (M) [Ole Stiansen Gaaskjenn]

Ingabouste (52) (F)

Oula (20) (F)

Gautan (17) (M)

Stien (12) (M)

Oula Alexerson (26) (M)

Anna Alexerson (25) (F)

Cerean Olson (37) (M)

Evidently, the Census Returns in 1850 were of a doubtful accuracy. Some of the immigrants who for example arrived on the *Nordpolen* and the *Hermes* in 1850 to New York, were not included in the list, and the total number of 121 Norwegians in the Returns is therefore obviously too low. On the whole, it seems to be to be very difficult to establish the exact number of Norwegian settlers in Missouri by 1850, because of sloppy registration and the tricky phonetic rendering of names.

9.4 STATISTICAL SURVEYS

As stated repeatedly, the history of Norwegian immigration to the St. Joseph area is a brief one. The period of settlement lasted only about 15 years, before a pause took over, and was thereafter replaced by a renewed interest in emigration in the 1880s, but then to Brooklyn and not the mid-west. In spite of the brevity of the period of settlement and the fairly limited number of immigrants involved, it is possible, however, to point to some essential features in the St. Joseph colony which set it apart from the “transplanted villages” described by e.g. Ostergren, Kamphoefner, Gjerde, and Sunde. Such features include distribution of sex and age groups, patterns of pivotal social decisions like marriage, movement to other locations, and also naming customs.

Table 9.3.: Norwegian settlers in Washington and Centre Townships, compared to the number of Norwegians in the state of Missouri; based upon “Index” (Part Four), and Federal Census Returns, 1850 and 1860:

	1847	1850	1855	1860
Washington and Centre Townships, Buchanan C.	52	171	194	-
Census Returns, Missouri	-	155	-	146

It is established that males dominated the initial stages of migration. In many cases the husband went first to America, and was followed later by his wife and children. When unmarried migrants are taken into consideration as well, men are numerically dominant.

This is also the case with the settlers in the St. Joseph colony. In the group of pioneers from 1847, men constituted 55.8%, women 44.2% of the total number of Norwegian immigrants. Three years later, the ratio was slightly narrowed: 53.8% and 46.2%. The situation corresponds to a normal development during the first decades of emigration to America, when females by and by would equal, and even surpass, the number of men going overseas. It is, however, interesting to note that the mass emigration from the Grimstad

district following the collapse of the tall ships' industry in the 1880s renewed the male dominance. Between 1885 and 1900, men represented 60-80 % of the yearly number of emigrants from the area.¹³

Table 9.4. Distribution of males and females; Buchanan County, 1847 and 1850; based upon material from "Index" (Part Four), and Federal Census Returns, 1850:

Year	Males	Females
1847 (N: 52)	29 (55.8%)	23 (44.2%)
1850 (N: 171)	92 (53.8%)	79 (46.2%)

In the chapter on the development of Landvik and Eide Parishes (6.14), characteristics of the distribution of age groups were presented. In short, the population in the two parishes at the time of emigration bore the image of a young nation; there were relatively many children and young people, and very few of more than 80 years of age.

The pioneer group in St. Joseph carried on many of the characteristics of the native parish. There were, however, some deviations from the home pattern.

- The number of infant children was lower in the new colony than in the old country, whereas those between one and three increased considerably in Missouri up to 1850.
- The group between three and ten is very much equal in the two locations.
- The group between ten and 20 is remarkably higher in 1847 in Missouri, but the number sinks in the following years.
- The group between 20 and 30 shows the same tendency, with sinking numbers up to 1850.
- The group between 30 and 40 has a lower proportion in Missouri compared to the two Norwegian parishes.
- The groups between 40 and 60 are of relative equal size, but for natural reasons (the prospects of a strenuous journey), there were very few immigrants of more than 60 years of age.

To sum up, children were born in St. Joseph in the years following the settlement, and births undoubtedly indicating optimism and contentment over their new life in America. The quite large group of young adolescents reminds one of the situation in Norway prior to

¹³ Evensen, op. cit.: 143.

emigration with rising problems connected to the scarcity of land. These youngsters would, of course, play an important role as farm hands and helpers in the family economy during the period of establishment. In the leading positions among the pioneers were mature middle-aged heads of families with experience and some financial means. Their decision to leave Norway was definitely not the result of youthful and hasty actions, but rather a deliberate and well-founded move to secure the future of coming generations. Important prerequisites for a successful settlement then came together in the pioneer group: experience and some learning, social stability and sufficient financial means, physical strength and a youthful reservoir of willing hands, and surroundings which allowed them to exploit their talents.

Table 9.5.; Distribution of age-groups; Norwegian settlers in Buchanan County, 1847 and 1850; Landvik and Eide Parishes, 1845; in %:

Age groups	Buchanan, '47	Buchanan, '50	Landvik, '45	Eide, '45
0 – 1	0	0.7	3.5	1.9
1 – 3	5.8	10.6	4.9	2.9
3 – 5	58	6.3	5.3	5.3
5 – 10	115	10.6	11.0	8.8
10 – 20	308	24.6	19.5	19.3
20 – 30	231	21.8	16.8	19.6
30 – 40	5.8	4.2	13.5	10.5
40 – 50	9.6	9.9	9.9	11.5
50 – 60	5.8	9.9	8.2	8.9
60 – 70	1.9	1.4	3.8	7.1
70 – 80	0	0	3.3	3.7
80 – 90	0	0	0.4	0.6
90 – 100	0	0	0	0
+ 100	0	0	0	0
	N: 52	N: 142	N: 1,890	N: 652

In his study of the Swedish settlement in *Isanti*, Minnesota, Robert C. Ostergren has amply shown the strong social correlations between the sending and receiving communities. In the *Isanti* settlement, social patterns from the home county were re-established, customs and practises were cemented, and would ensure the prolonged workings of ethnic stability and

kinship networks. Also marriage patterns similar to those in Sweden were established within the first years of settlement and lasted through the rest of the century. “[L]ocal kinship networks seem to have played key roles in encouraging repeated marriage alliances within circumscribed social groupings.”¹⁴

Most of the immigrant households in Ostergren’s study were led by middle-aged men with large, young families, many of them Swedish-born. The marriage patterns of this group of young immigrants are, according to Ostergren, an important “test of the strength of old patterns among the first generation to grow up in the new American settlements.”¹⁵

The basis for the investigation was children from 23 *Gärdsjö* households who grew up in the 1870s and 1880s. 25 men and women from these households married in the 1890s. Twenty-one of them married someone from another household in the *Gärdsjö* network. The remaining four married within a wider social circle, but still chose Swedes of pioneer stock.

Ostergren maintains that the remarkably high level of endogamous marriage behaviour, points to “an uncommonly strong sense of social identification based on local origins.”¹⁶ The situation in the Norwegian colony in Missouri was quite different.

In the settlement years, there were 62 marriages in the “Landvik-group” in St. Joseph. Of the immigrants who arrived in 1847, 31 young people in the settlement found a spouse; only 13 chose someone within the Norwegian kinship circle, 15 found a companion with a British/American name, two looked to German immigrants, and one chose a Dane. This pattern of openness to “foreign” marriages continued with the group who arrived in 1849: there was a 50-50 % division, five newcomers found a Norwegian spouse, whereas the remaining five chose someone from British/American milieus. Young people in the fairly large contingent who arrived in 1850 did not stray from this pattern: of 21 marriages, 11 married someone from Norway, and ten preferred a spouse with a British/ American background. In other words, the Norwegian immigrants of the three mentioned years were uncommonly open to look outside their own national group to find a spouse: 46.8 % of them preferred companions of Norwegian stock, 53.2% chose foreign, primarily British/ American.

Only the middle-aged immigrants of the first generation were unanimous in their preference of Norwegian women. Osul Eng (Osul Nelson) and Anders Holte (Anders Nelson), both widowers, brought their new wives over from kinship networks in Norway.

¹⁴ Ostergren. *A Community Transplanted*: 232.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*: 233.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Parallel to the conclusions made in Ostergren's study, Rasmus Sunde also emphasizes the tendency among Norwegian settlers from the west coast to retain the cultural heritage in the new world, and quotes Odd Lovoll who maintains that Norwegian immigrants showed the most marked tendency to hold fast to their ethnic and cultural characteristics. Marriage patterns become the best test of the degree of assimilation among the immigrants.¹⁷ Other scholars have advocated the view that "[i]nter-marriage [is] the most destructive element to the survival of ethnic culture."¹⁸

The propensity to marry within your ethnic group is likewise presented by W.D. Kamphoefner in his study of German settlers in Missouri. In St. Charles and Warren Counties (1850) he found that out of 612 marriages, 569 were entered between partners born in Germany. Only one German woman in one hundred had an American husband, and only four % of the German men married outside their ethnic group. Kamphoefner dryly remarks that "the melting pot held little attraction for Germans."¹⁹

The Norwegian settlers in St. Joseph are consequently of a somewhat special kind. To a far lesser degree than other settlers in the same period, they were open in relation to new cultural impulses, and were pragmatic in the sense that they chose sensible solutions in the meeting between home and foreign social arrangements. In their act of breaking loose from the old restraints in Norway, they relied heavily on cultural and social factors embedded in the so-called meso-level. They represented a tightly-woven group of related emigrants, they were in many cases well-read and educated, they were people of some means, and had gained experience in political, religious, and social matters Norway. They made use of their talents and experience in their meeting with a new land and it facilitated their process of assimilation. It may be that the smallness of their group more or less forced them to be less selective, less confined to their own kind, but it is also tempting to point to their pre-emigration cultural background and geographical setting of their community on the southernmost Norwegian coastline. People on that coastline held dear long-established traditions of contacts with the continent, and even more remote parts of the world. They were closely linked to the sea, often travelled widely on their ships, and one could argue that they brought with them a distinctly broad outlook and a certain positive curiosity about things new and different.

¹⁷ Sunde, op. cit.: 266-267.

¹⁸ Leonard Dinnerstein, Roger L. Nichols, David M. Reimers. *Natives and Strangers: A Multicultural History of Americans* (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003): 143.

¹⁹ Kamphoefner, op. cit.: 112-113.

Table 9.6: Marriage patterns; marriages in the United States, choice of spouse among the pioneers and their children (first and second generation), 1847-1850; statistical basis: "Index" (Part Four):

Spouse from:	Norway	Britain/ U. S.	Germany	Denmark
Immigrants of '47	13	15	2	1
Immigrants of '49	5	5	0	0
Immigrants of '50	11	10	0	0
Total 1847-1850	29	30	2	1

The same tendency to move outside their ethnic environment is also seen in the immigrants' naming practises. Rasmus Sunde remarks that naming traditions may be an indicator of how strong traditions are in a local community. The people from Vik in the 1840s and 1850s continued to give their children very much the same names (Nordic and biblical) as they had done back in Norway. American names were gradually introduced and eventually preferred only in the 1860s.²⁰

In the St. Joseph colony, however, the preference of American names became clear almost from the first day of the settlement. Children of the pioneers, born after their arrival in 1847, were often given typical American names, and in some instances names which were easily recognized on both sides of the Atlantic. Of the 13 children born of parents from the pioneer group, eight were blessed with American-sounding names: Peter, Henry, Amelia, Nicolas, Julia, Oscar, Mary Jane, and Louisa.

Although the pioneers in the "Landvik-group" showed a willingness to move beyond the confines of their own borders, they also showed a strong attachment to their colony. There are very few recorded instances of people from this group moving out to other towns or states, and the geographical cohesiveness of the settlement is remarkable, especially in the light of the mentioned tendencies to break new ground. From the first and second generation, 13 of the settlers are recorded moving out. Of these, three travelled within the state of Missouri, to St. Louis, five people went to neighbouring Nebraska to make a try at ranching, and another five individuals dispersed to Oklahoma, Idaho, Washington D.C., California, and New Orleans.

²⁰ Sunde, op. cit.: 264.

Table 9.7: Recorded movement to other locations than Buchanan County, MO and Doniphan County, KS; the pioneers and their children (first and second generation); statistical basis: "Index" (Part Four):

	Idaho	Oklahoma	St. Louis	Nebraska	California	New Orleans	Washington D.C.
Number, "movers"	1	1	3	5	1	1	1

9.5 CELEBRATING THE EXODUS

In 1896 the pioneers and their descendants gathered at East Norway to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the exodus to America. *The Weekly Kansas Chief* reported the celebration.²¹ There was certainly pride in their Norwegian background, and the newspaper duly reported the growth of the number of descendants of Osul Nelson and Peder Nelson: 126 and 81 respectively. At the same time, this was also a reminder of the bifurcation of the St. Joseph colony into a "mother" and a "daughter" settlement, unofficially headed by the two venerable gentlemen.

Last Thursday, at East Norway, was celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the sailing of a later generation of Norwegian immigrants.²² The celebration and basket dinner were held at the beautiful lawn of Mrs. Gurine Nelson, about half a mile west of Norway Church. From the top of one of the tallest pine trees growing on the lawn, floated a large American flag; for the Norwegian citizens are loyal and law abiding. From the house top floated the national flag of Norway, and on the front of the house beneath the cornice, were the dates woven from evergreens 1846 – 1896.

After dinner the speaking began. The principal speaker was Nels O. Nelson, a prosperous merchant of St. Louis, a son of Peder Nelson who was one of the original immigrants,²³ the speaker having been a boy of two years of age when they came over. His address was well and happily delivered, and was very interesting. Being a history of the voyage, with incidents of their earlier years in America.

²¹ *The Weekly Kansas Chief*, September 17, 1896; the passage is collected in Anna M. Francis, *Norwegian Immigrants and Their Ancestors, Doniphan County 1874-1924*, (private collection of newspaper clippings): 39-45.

²² Compared to the first Viking explorers.

²³ Corrected: N.O. Nelson was the son of Anders Nielsen Holte (Anders Nelson).

The following is an account of the voyage:

The colony set sail on the 17th of September 1846, from Grimstad, on the extreme southern coast of Norway, on the “Louise Caroline”²⁴, a 400- ton- ship, and changed at Havre, France, to the “Ezette”, of about 500 Tons. The following are the names of the adult persons of the colony:

Men: Peter Nelson, Osul Nelson, Anders Nelson, Knud Hoverson, Bent Hanson, Ole Halvorson, Ole Bjeland, Halvor Bjeland, Osul Anderson, Osul Kittelson, Lars Hoverson, Knud Iveland, Aanaan Iveland, Simon Simonson, Louis Nelson, Nils Knutson, Hans Omondson, Alette Omondson, Hans Enge, Christian Halvorson, Ole Skomager, Torjes Harrabor, Gunar Kjeland, Jon Kjeland, Gjerold Olson, and Else Osterhuus.

Women: Karen Nelson, Gunnil Nelson, Gertrude Nelson, Astrid Hoverson, Trone Hanson, Karen Halvorsen, Mrs. Ole Bjeland, Maren Anderson, Christiane Hoverson, and Mrs. Osul Kittelson.

Children: Nels P. Nelson, George Nelson, Sarah Nelson, Mary Christine Nelson, Laura Nelson, Elise Nelson, Gurine Nelson, Aase Nelson, Tyra Nelson, Mary Nelson, Trine Nelson, Nels G. Nelson, Grater Maria Nelson, Nels O. Nelson, Christine Hanson, Elise Hansen, Mathilda Hanson, Bergetta Hanson, Aletta Halvorson, Orilla Bergetta Nelson, Alette Omondson, Hans Omondson, Helmar Hoverson, Edward Hoverson, Eli Hoverson, Anne Hoverson, Christine Hoverson, Kittle Hoverson, Hover Hoverson, John Hoverson, Andrew Hoverson, Tomine Hoverson, Anders Anderson, Gunar Anderson, Nels Anderson, Gunder Anderson, Osul Anderson, Peter Anderson, and a son and a daughter of the Kittelsons, whose names are forgotten.²⁵ (...)

²⁴ The correct name of the ship was the *Grethe Lovise*.

²⁵ The full and correct Norwegian names (before marriage and Americanization set in) should be: Peter Nelson = Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven, Osul Nelson = Osul Nielsen Enge, Anders Nelson = Anders Nielsen Holte, Knud Hoverson = Knut Håversen Østerhus, Bent Hanson = Bent Hansen Molland, Ole Halvorson = Ole Halvorsen Konnestad, Ole Bjeland = Ole Nielsen Bjelland, Halvor Bjeland = Halvor Nielsen Bjelland, Osul Anderson = Osul Andersen Løvaasen, Osul Kittelson = Osul Kittelsen Igland, Lars Hoverson = Lars Haaversen Stensvand, Knud Iveland = Knud Torkildsen Iveland, Aanaan Iveland = Aanen Torkildsen Iveland, Simon Simonson = Simon Simonsen Kulaasen, Louis Nelson (Lewis) = Lars Nielsen Haabesland, Nils Knutson = ?, Hans Omondson = Hans Ommundsen Espægren, Alette Omondson = Alette Omundsdatter Espægren, Hans Enge = Hans Christiansen Enge, Christian Halvorson = Christen Halvorsen Hellenen, Ole Skomager = Ole Johnsen Grindevoldsliden (?), Torjes Harrabor = Torjus Gundersen Hardeberg, Gunar Kjeland = Gunder (Gunnar) Halvorsen Kiland, Jon Kjeland = John Beruldsen Kiland, Gjerold Olson = Gjerulf O. Nævisdaleia, Else Osterhuus = Else Anstendatter Skiftenes Østerhus. Karen Nelson = Karen Marthea Olsdatter Bjerke, Gunnil Nelson = Gunnhild Terjesdatter Håland, Gertrude Nelson = Gjertrud Omundsdatter Espægren, Astrid Hoverson = Astrid Ivarsdatter Lunden, Trone Hanson = Trone (Tonje) Løvorsdatter, Karen Halvorson = Karen Clemmetsdatter, Mrs. Ole Bjeland = Berthe

The colony was bound for either Texas or Missouri, an agent having been sent on the year before, to select a place; and when the landing was made at New Orleans, it had not yet been decided which State they would settle in. They arrived when the Mexican War was at its height; the Battle of Monterey having been fought a few days before they sailed, and the battle of Buena Vista occurring a few weeks after they landed.

New Orleans was the great depot for the shipment of troops and supplies, and all was bustle and excitement. This possibly decided them not to go to Texas. They remained in New Orleans until April 1st and then took a steamboat for Weston, Missouri. On arrival, they stopped one night in Weston, and then pushed on for St. Joseph, arriving April 14, 1847. They began coming to Doniphan County, in 1856, settling on Bush Creek and vicinity, in Wayne Township; and in 1857, those who came over settled in East Norway,²⁶ in Wolf River Township.

Of those who came over the following died in New Orleans:

Osul Kittelson, wife and boy, Knud Hoverson, Else Osterhuus, Gjerold Olson, Mrs. Ole Bjeland, and son, Mrs. Trone Hanson, Gjertrude Nelson, Isetta Nelson, and Hans Omondson.

James Peters, mate on the Isette, married one of the colonists, one of the Nelson girls, and they lived in Buchanan County. Hans Nelson met the party in New

Ommundsdatter, Maren Anderson = Maren Nilsdatter Igland, Christiane Hoverson = Kristianne Kittelsdatter Slettene, Mrs. Osul Kittelson = Torine Berulvsdatter Kiland; (maiden names).

Nels P. Nelson = Nels Peter (Nielsen Kalvehaven), George Nelson = Jørgen (Nielsen Kavehaven), Sarah Nelson = Sarah (Nielsen Kalvehaven), Mary Christine Nelson = Maren Christine (Nielsen Kalvehaven), Laura Nelson = Olava (Nielsen Kalvehaven), Elise Nelson = Aasille Elise (Nielsen Kalvehaven), Gurine Nelson = Gurine (Nielsen Enge), Aase Nelson = Aase (Nielsen Enge), Tyra Nelson = Tyra (Terje) (Nielsen Enge), Mary Nelson = Maren (Nielsen Enge), Trine Nelson = Trine (Nielsen Enge), Nels G. Nelson = Nels Gustav (Nielsen Enge), Grater Maria Nelson = Gurine (Nielsen Enge), Nels O. Nelson = Nels Olaus (Nielsen Holte), Christine Hanson = ?, Elise Hansen = ?, Mathilda Hanson = Mathilda (Hansen Molland), Bergetta Hanson = Bergetta (Hansen Molland), Aletta Halvorson = Alette (Halvorsen Konnestad), Orilla Bergetta Nelson = Oriella Bergetta (Nielsen Holte), Alette Omondson = Alette Ommundsdatter Espægren (?) (maid servant), Hans Omondson = Hans Ommundsen Espægren (?), Helmar Hoverson = Helmer (Håversen Østerhus), Edward Hoverson = Ivar (Håversen Østerhus), Eli Hoverson = ?, Anne Hoverson = Anne Kristine (Håversen Østerhus), Christine Hoverson = Anne Kristine Håversen Østerhus), Kittle Hoverson = Kittel Tobias (Haaversen Stensvand), Hover Hoverson = Haaver (Haaversen Stensvand), John Hoverson = Johannes (Haaversen Stensvand), Andrew Hoverson = Andreas (Haaversen Stensvand), Tomine Hoverson = Inger Tomine (Haaversen Stensvand), Anders Anderson = Anders (Andersen Løvaasen), Gunar Anderson = Gunder (Gunnar) (Andersen Løvaasen), Nels Anderson = Nels (Andersen Løvaasen), Gunder Anderson = listed twice?, Osul Anderson = Osul (Andersen Løvaasen), Peter Anderson = Peder (Andersen Løvaasen), son and daughter of the Kittelons = three children survived the illness in New Orleans: Karen, Bergette, and Aasulv.

See also *Index*, year 1846.

²⁶ Later known as Moray (1894).

Orleans, got acquainted with Aase Nelson, married her there, and came on with the others. Trine Nelson was S.E. Hardy's first wife.

*The Osul Nelson descendants now number 126 persons living mostly in Doniphan County. The Peter Nelson descendants now number 81 living largely in Buchanan and Platte Counties, Missouri.*²⁷

9.6 THE HUNGER FOR LAND

The immigrants of 1847 came from a district where their few acres of tillable soil were hemmed in by rocks, mountains and forests. Although their farms were sheltered, and they enjoyed a favourable climate after Norwegian standards, they must have been overwhelmed by the sight of the almost endless expanses of deep and fertile soil in Missouri when they arrived in late spring. Osul Nelson's remark that he "raced around for two weeks,"²⁸ looking for the best choice of land, may be symptomatic of the exuberance shared by all the newly arrived peasants.

Since Peder Nelson is made the subject of a case study (see 9.8), the following account of the process of finding a homestead in Buchanan County is based upon the information found in letters from the other settlers, supplemented by figures from the *Agricultural Schedules* in the Census Returns for Missouri, 1850.

The Norwegian immigrants came to St. Joseph at a favourable time. It was a period of transition in the new town, many settlers were eager to sell their plots before going to Oregon. The newcomers were therefore in a position to purchase both land which was partly cultivated, and also in some cases modest houses which at least gave them a shelter during the first months. Sometimes there would also be tools, farm implements, and furniture for sale. Instead of using all their time and strength to build houses, the Norwegians could almost right away devote their energies to ploughing, sowing, and planting, allowing income from the first crop to be postponed.²⁹

The "Landvik-group" stuck together, and made their selection of land along an axis

²⁷ On the sixtieth anniversary of the sailing from Norway, celebrated on September 20, 1906, *The Weekly Kansas Chief* mostly repeated the information given in 1896; Anna M. Francis, op. cit, 1: 83 – 86.

²⁸ Osul (Engel) Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 1.

²⁹ A settler in the 1850s needed resources in cash and equipment totalling \$ 1,000 in order to establish a farm of some 160 acres. A foothold might be purchased for less than \$1,000, but that would be a tenuous position, forcing the settler to work at labour wages whenever possible. Clarence H. Danhof. *Change in agriculture: The Northern United States 1820-1870* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969): 125.

going southeast from the town centre. Osul Nelson tells that he found his site seven miles south-southeast from St. Joseph, consisting of 160 acres with a house and a stable. The house was a modest cabin, though fitted with a kitchen, and perhaps most important, it was tight and warm. He goes on to list details:

About 40 acres were fenced in, 30 acres ploughed up, 7 to 8 sowed with winter seed. In the bargain I got a good horse, 12 cows, 10 sheep, 27 pigs, great and small included. Two geese, 50 hens, and in addition farming tools and household contents. ... A veneered mahogany chest of drawers, a living room clock, the half-share of a big plough and a smaller plough, spades, and some kitchen utensils like pots, pans etc.; for all this I paid 420 dollars. Moreover, I must pay to the government or the State of Missouri 200 dollars for the land.³⁰

It seems that Osul Nelson had made a financially wise start. He was well within the amount of the \$1,000 traditionally regarded as necessary to get established in America. In fact, he was quickly ready to get to work the soil and secure cash income for his family.

In addition to his 160 acres, he also bought 40 acres of woodland (for which he paid right away), and was seemingly satisfied to see others from the group settle nearby:

Astrid Østerhus has bought land next to mine, Osuld Løvåsen and Lars Stensvand about 1 mile away. Peder Kalvehaven about 3 miles from my place, all of them in the same manner as I and on the same kind of land, and in between, Ole Konnestad and a certain Peder Eilersen from Tromøy Parish, have claimed near 8 acres.³¹

Reporting to his family in Norway, he goes on to praise the good prospects for himself, his wife and children, and the good health they have enjoyed. He had never expected to be the owner of land and houses in such a short time. Everything had indeed turned out beyond expectations. The land itself was really a source of wonder and excitement:

The land here is very fertile. Here grows what you sow in abundance, and as you know, without fertilizers, although the soil is mostly given a careless and bad treatment. For the most part one grows maize, or corn as it is called here. Wheat, hemp and oats, though the latter only for cattle. The corn is also mostly eaten by cattle and pigs, even though it was good and wholesome nourishment for people, giving

³⁰ Osul (Eide) Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 1.

³¹ *Ibid.*

*somewhat dry bread, but it is very well suited to the heap of pork eaten here. Potatoes are also grown, rye, barley and many different garden crops.*³²

The 45-year-old farmer continues his praise of the conditions in the New World, in his eyes a real agricultural cornucopia:

*It is admirable to see how many things grow here. Natural conditions are very favourable here in all respects. The soil is very easy to till. Ditches are not needed, there are no boulders to struggle with, you only need to fence in the piece of land you want to cultivate, and afterwards sow and plough.*³³

He then reaches his summing up of conditions in America compared to Norway. He is quite certain that the fertile prairies were meant to be the home of men, which barren Norway is not. In a moment of possible boastfulness, he even claims that he could feed the whole population in Eide Parish if his farm was fully cultivated.³⁴

In his next letter to his relatives in Norway, Osul Nelson devoted a lengthy portion to a minute description of the growing of hemp, his main product. In fact, the Agricultural Schedules for 1850 show that he produced ten tons of dew rotted hemp, 50% of the total production of hemp among the Norwegians in Buchanan County.³⁵

*I shall tell you something of the way we produce hemp, as I think it might interest those who have not heard about it before. We plant the seeds in April or the beginning of May. The soil is ploughed well and harrowed even, is sown with 1 ½ bushel of seed an acre in the same way as one sows barley, and harrowed lightly. ... Towards the end or the middle of August one cuts it with a fitted sickle. Then it is collected, and put in round stacks in the field. ... Then one brings in the breaking, when the weather is dry. ... Breaking is common, simple work and the wages are 1 dollar per ... or 100 pounds in Norway. This is reckoned to be a day's work. Here are also those who break about 200 pounds a day, and more when the weather is fairly dry and the hemp is good. This may seem improbable for those who are not acquainted with this, but my son Terje breaks more than 100 pounds a day on his best days last winter, and he is just a little boy. I am not a hemp breaker myself.*³⁶

Having also given a detailed account of the growing of wheat and corn, Osul Nelson returns to hemp, and concludes that it gives many times the profit of wheat and other produce,

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ *Agricultural Schedules, Census Records, Buchanan County, Missouri, 1850.* Copies of microfilm supplied by the Missouri State Historical Society, Columbia, MO. See survey in Table 9.8.

³⁶ Osul Nelson, 1854. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 2.*

but it requires a lot of manpower. The *Agricultural Schedules* report that he harvested 300 bushels of wheat in 1850, at a price according to his own letter, of 50 cents a bushel. The rest of his produce that year was divided between 250 bushels of corn, 75 bushels of oats, and ten tons of hemp. The price of hemp varied greatly, and he remarks in his letter from 1854 that he was paid from 60 to 100 dollars a ton.

The farmers of the “Landvik-group” were evidently quick at adopting both American farming techniques and staple crops. In this respect, they were like the Germans in Missouri, who also facilitated their agricultural achievements by a rapid adaptation to American farm methods.³⁷ In his letter from 1854, Osul Nelson tells that they in the main produce hemp, corn, wheat, oats and potatoes, which is to say that the crops of 1850 were carried on. New machinery had also been taken into use: he is (in 1854) waiting for one of the many threshing machines in the neighbourhood. The use of big ploughs, drawn by eight or ten oxen, must have impressed the immigrants at first sight. As early as 1848, newly invented heavy machinery was on its way into the Missouri fields:

*A threshing machine is recently bought not far from here at a cost of 300 dollars, with it one may thresh up to 400 bushels a day, where the grain comes clean right into the sack, the straw and the chaff are separated and come out a different way.*³⁸

The efforts put into the cultivation of the soil, through manual labour and the use of new machinery and various implements, and the large harvests they usually experienced, undoubtedly delighted the settlers, who were used to quite different farming conditions in the native country. Their income was, however, supplemented by domestic animals and wild produce from their surroundings:

There is a great deal of wild fruits here, of different kinds. Here are whole forests of plumtrees, and they carry quite good plums. Hazelnuts are so numerous that it is impossible to describe. In low places the grass grows the height of a man on horesback's shoulder, where cattle graze. I assure you that I can neither say it, nor can it be understood by those who have not been outside Norwegian territory, how things grow here, so I will say no more about it.

³⁷ W.D. Kamphoefner, op. cit.: 186.

³⁸ Osul Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 1.

*Cattle are kept in the free, winter and summer, because we don't have cowsheds for cows, sheep or pigs. We have a stable for horses most in use, the rest are kept outside. Here is also an easy way to herd, you give them only some salt to get them into the habit of returning home. Milch cows are kept in that way.*³⁹

The Norwegian settlers seem to have lived mainly contented lives in the period which followed after their arrival in 1847. Their first letters mirror the apparent joy they felt at having arrived safely, having purchased bigger farms than appeared in their most optimistic dreams, and having secured a decent living and a future for the children. After some years the exuberance waned, they felt old age creeping in, their bodies ached, their eyesight was bad, and the toll of various illnesses and deaths altered the show of initial surplus of energy into more sombre tones. Writes Hover Stensvand (Lars Haaversen Stensvand's son) from St. Joseph in 1866:

*We have evil days change for good days, and good days for evil days, one must take whatever comes. Otherwise I have nothing to amuse you with. The crops seem good, and the harvest weather is very good. I expect to thresh 4 to 500 bushels of wheat and barley, of which the wheat is priced at 2 dollars per bushel. Everything we have to sell is fairly priced, otherwise we could not live, everything we buy is very expensive. I have fought my way as best we can and we are content. Life is very slow with me these days.*⁴⁰

9.7 THE AGRICULTURAL SCHEDULES, 1850

The letters from the pioneers give first-hand, and very personal, information about the whole process of settlement. The letters are not many, and apparently only Osul Nelson and Peder Nelson were inclined to write full accounts of the exciting meeting with America. From a different point of view, the *Agricultural Schedules*, included in the *Census Returns* from 1850, furnish us with reliable and objective information about the financial situation on the "Norwegian" farms, expressed through estimates of the value of their farms, their farming equipment, their livestock, and their different agricultural produce.

In the 1850 survey, nine of the immigrants are included. Those who are left out are the four bachelors who volunteered for service in the Army, and were engaged in patrolling and building forts on the Oregon Trail. The shoemaker, Bent Hansen Molland, is not listed, but

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Håver (Hover) Stensvand, 1866. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 14.

Peder Nelson remarks in his letter from 1857 that he also had made a good start in St. Joseph.⁴¹

The economic situation for the nine farmers and their families is very diverse. Peder Nelson clearly stands out as the most affluent of the group. Not only is he listed with 80 improved acres of farmland, plus 890 acres of unimproved land, but he also resides on his wide expanse of land in collaboration with his son George and his son-in-law James Pettis. The cash value of his farm is set at \$10,000, and the combined number of domestic animals and the impressive figures of harvested crops shared by the three men, enhances the picture of a successful and quite prosperous farmer. At the other end of the scale, we find Ole Halvorsen Konnestad, who had only been able to purchase six acres of cultivated land, and whose only product was 100 lbs. of butter. He came over with slender means, his farm in Norway was a very small one, with little agricultural produce, and apparently he had not been able to lift himself in St. Joseph, and probably would have had to rely on employment from others to feed his family. In between these two extremes, the others place themselves with farms valued at \$ 800 - \$2,000.

In detail, the *Schedules* (table 9.9) present the following picture:

- Domestic animals. With the exception of Ole Halvorsen Konnestad, all farms possessed at least one horse (George Nelson had three, Lars Haaversen five). The Peder Nelson triangle had 18 working oxen, Osul Nelson had eight. All farms had milch cows (again with the exception of Ole Halvorsen); the number ranged from 11 (Peder Nelson & co.) to three or four. Lars Haaversen kept 28 sheep, Osul Andersen had six. Quite many of the settlers kept swine, from 60 (Peder Nelson and family), to 3-25. The value of the livestock varied from \$50 - \$900.
- Agricultural crops. Apart from rye (which the Norwegians did not grow) American staple crops were included. Five of the settlers harvested wheat, from 40 to 600 bushels. Indian corn was one of the most popular crops among the Norwegians, the harvest ranged from 250 bushels to 2,000 bushels. Oats were in less use, harvests were from 60 to 75 bushels. Irish potatoes gave from 20 to 50 bushels for three of the farmers. Butter was produced on five of the farms, from 100 to 300 lbs. each. Osul Nelson's favoured crop, hemp, was harvested on four of the farms, and yielded from two to ten tons per farm.

⁴¹ Peder Nelson, 1857. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 7.

It is of course tempting to compare the achievements of the small band of Norwegian farmers in Buchanan County to their numerous German and American counterparts in St. Charles and Warren Counties, the area which W.D. Kamphoefner has studied in detail. Obviously, the few Norwegians make for a poor basis for statistical comparisons, and the following tables should be used with caution, and taken as little more than tentative hints related to a general picture.

Table 9.8.: Agricultural production of Germans and Americans (St. Charles and Warren Counties, 1850), and Norwegians (Buchanan County, 1850); median values per farm. Source: Agricultural Schedules, Missouri, 1850 and W.D. Kamphoefner, op. cit.: 127-130:

	All Germans	All Americans	Norwegians ("Landvik-group")
Median value of real estate (\$)	371	870	2,100
Number of improved acres (median)	25	40	29
Number of horses (median)	2.6	3.5	1.8
Number of oxen (median)	2.1	2.4	2.9
Number of milch cows (median)	2.2	3.8	3.2
Number of swine (median)	15	25	13
Wheat (bushels)	50	80	121
Rye (bushels)	10	21	0
Oats (bushels)	40	100	22
Corn (bushels)	201	501	461
Hemp (tons)	0	2	2.2
Value of implements per improved acre (\$)	2.27	1.72	1.30
N:	833	972	9

Peder Nelson's large estate poses a problem of weight and dominance in the small group of nine Norwegian farmers. If Nelson is excluded from the group, the median value of the Norwegian farms all the same reaches the impressive sum of \$1,150, which is considerably higher than the median value of German and American farms in Missouri. One may therefore at least suggest that the people from the "Landvik-group" were relatively well off in 1850, and competed successfully with other nationalities closer to St. Louis in terms of estate and agricultural production. They were at an advantage in terms of farm size and value of farm, not least in comparison with the Irish settlers who on average only had a holding valued at \$93. At the other end of the scale were the few British settlers with a background of landed aristocracy; the median value of their farms was set at \$2,046.⁴² The differences between the three nationalities (German, American, Norwegian) may be rather slight, but one might note that the Germans stayed away from hemp, whereas the Norwegians relied quite heavily on that crop;⁴³ on the other hand, the Norwegians shunned rye. The Norwegians had made wheat and corn their main crops, and almost seem to surpass even the Americans in that respect.

In Norway Grove, according to Jon Gjerde, the immigrants initially grew more barley and oats, which they knew from their homeland, than did their neighbours. But Norwegians there also sowed considerable amounts of wheat, which had been a negligible crop on the Norwegian west coast, and later specialized even further in this cash grain. One may see this as an abandonment of cultural heritage, and the tendency was also brought further by a new division of labour in the families: the women were largely restricted to household and gardening, instead of taking part in dairying and haying as they had been accustomed to in Norway.⁴⁴

The Swedish case introduced by Robert Ostergren, shows much the same picture. In Isanti, there was little resistance to take part in the local market economy and the farming methods and natural crops of the region. Nearly half the acreage was devoted to wheat, which was unknown in their home county, while their main crop at home, barley, never had any great importance in America.⁴⁵

The Norwegians had relatively few horses, but were in the lead with their oxen, and had in addition a good many swine. In a period when new labour-saving and mechanical

⁴² W.D. Kamphoefner, op. cit.: 124.

⁴³ The letters from the settlers during the early years in Missouri, abound in excited descriptions about the wonders of this new and little known plant. See e.g. Osul Nelson, 1848, 1854. *Letters from the Pioneers*, nos. 1, 2.

⁴⁴ Gjerde. *From Peasants to Farmers*: 168-201.

⁴⁵ Ostergren. *From Rättvik to Isanti*: 140-141.

implements were introduced in agriculture, it is also noteworthy that the Norwegians put least importance on the acquisition of such implements. Their background in a developing country with little such machinery may have put them at a disadvantage.

Although the settlers had achieved a varying degree of success as farmers in America, Osul Nelson may be right when he at the end of his letter from 1854 summed up the situation for the Norwegians in St. Joseph, by reiterating “they do well” to characterize his fellow settlers and their doings in Missouri:

My brother Ole Lien lives well with his 3 children, they are all in good health. He has a good farm and prospects of a good income, but he sends the jar a bit too often to town. Anders Holte also lives well, and they are in good health. As you may know, he is married to Anne Iversdatter Lunden. They have no children so far. He too has a good property, probably some debts, but in progress. Osul Løvaasen also lives well, and they are in good health, except Gunborg who is not quite well. ... Nils Gutormsen also lives well with his family. He has now 2 children, having had a son here in America. He moved house last autumn, and rebuilt his houses. He is in good progress. ...Maren Ørteland is really married, with Håver Larsen Stensvand. They have a 40-acre-farm, and good prospects of an income. Berte Gundersdatter Stene is married to Lars Nilsen Aalien. They have 80 acres of land close to my property, and good prospects of an income.⁴⁶

Also noteworthy is the fact that the Norwegian settlers attracted very little attention in newspapers and later works of local history. They remained rather modest and unobtrusive members of their community. They were law-abiding and God-fearing citizens who worked diligently on their land; none of the pioneers held any kind of public office in Buchanan County.⁴⁷

A scrutiny of available works on Buchanan history, gives a meagre catch. Only the following Norwegians of the first two generations are given biographical notices:

- *George A. Nelson, a native of Norway. Went to California in 1853, worked with mining until 1861. Has a well-contained farm of 100 acres. Spent 12 months in the Missouri State Militia. Married to Osa Thompson. Children: Irena, Newton, Thomas,*

⁴⁶ Osul Nelson, 1854. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 2.

⁴⁷ No Norwegians were elected as City officers in the period 1845-1881. *History of Buchanan County, Missouri*: 437-438 and 440-457.

*Clarence. His father, Peder Nelson, lives on the adjoining farm. He was engaged in boat-building in his native country and was also working on the sea.*⁴⁸

- *Mary Christina Nelson Weddle, resides in the old homestead in Centre Township. Married to Frederick Weddle, a Dane who came to Missouri after his father had been expelled from the Danish Court. Frederick Weddle went to California during the gold-rush in 1849. Has a farm of 150 acres. Children: Fred, Peter, Charlotte, Martha, Valdemar, Harold, Nettie.*⁴⁹

- *Osul Mathias Dannevig, came from a family in Norway who owned a fleet of fishing boats and 12,000 lobster pots. Married to Sara Nelson in 1846. Settled 3 miles south-east of St. Joseph. Children: Mathias, Peter, Will. Went to California in 1852. Engaged in driving cattle overland to Santa Fe. Came home via Panama when wife died. Married Gunborg Anderson in 1855. With 13th Kansas Infantry, company C in Civil War. Stayed at Fort Laramie 1862-65. Moved to Kansas in 1873.*⁵⁰

- The notice on Peder Nelson is written by Katherine M. Nelson, and gives the details of his journey to Missouri, and his settlement near St. Joseph. *Marriages: Aasille Elise married to James Pettis; Olava married to Ole Stinson; Maren Christine married to Frederick Weddle. Peder Nelson was a slave owner and held Southern sympathies. Sons: George A., married to Osa Thompson; Nels Peter, in California in 1853; claimed land near Weston, MO; a fruit grower; married to Inger Tomine Hoverson. The people in the family are members of the First Lutheran Church. Nels Peter had 9 children: Leroy Price, George A., Kate Saline, Cora Alice, Pauline Anne, Nora Jane, Clara May, Laura Christine, Nina Pearl.*⁵¹

- *Ole S. Steanson was not part of the first inner circle (arrived in 1850), but he is given a paragraph. Runs a large farm of 530 acres. Came from Holt Parish with his parents to New York in 1850. Married to Laura Nelson in 1860. His father-in-law is Peder Nelson, who has a farm of 800 acres, a hemp farmer and a slave owner.*⁵²

⁴⁸ *History of Buchanan County and St. Joseph, Missouri.*: 838.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*: 932 and 439.

⁵⁰ *The Heritage of Buchanan County, Missouri*: 188.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*: 358.

⁵² *Ibid.*: 315.



The Pettis-Nelson Homestead, St. Joseph, MO. Own photograph, 2006.

The following works have been consulted without finding any mention of Norwegians in Buchanan County: Sheridan A. Logan. *Old St. Jo, Gateway to the West, 1799-1932*; Walter Williams. ed. *A History of Northwest Missouri*; *The Daily News' History of Buchanan County and St. Joseph, Mo.*; Howard R. Lamar. *The New Encyclopedia of the American West*.

Table 9.9.: "Productions of agriculture", Buchanan County, MO, 1850; *Agricultural Schedules, Census Returns, Missouri, 1850*.⁵³

Farmer	Acres of land Improved; Unimproved	Cash value of farm (\$)	Value of farm machinery (\$)	Horses	Milch cows	Working oxen	Sheep	Swine	Value of live stock (\$)	Wheat (bush.)	Rye (bush.)	Indian corn (bush.)	Oats (bush.)	Irish potatoes (bush.)	Butter (lbs.)	Dew rotted hemp (tons)
Peter Nelson	80; 890	10,000	150	1	5	6	-	30	750	600	-	2,000	-	-	-	5
James Pettis	-	-	-	1	1	-	1	10	-	-	-	500	-	-	-	2
George Nelson	50; 190	2,000	100	3	5	12	-	20	900	50	-	500	-	-	-	-
Astra Everson	15; 145	2,000	20	2	3	-	-	3	130	-	-	300	60	-	-	-
Osul Nelson	50; 190	2,000	20	1	3	8	-	12	261	300	-	250	75	-	150	10
Oula Helverson	6; -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100	-
Ousal Anderson	18; 62	800	10	2	4	-	6	25	150	40	-	300	-	50	150	3
Lose Hoverson	30; 170	1,600	20	5	4	-	28	20	300	100	-	300	60	20	300	-
Andis Nelson	14; 66	800	20	1	4	-	-	-	50	-	-	-	-	50	200	-

Note: - Clarification of listed names: George Nelson = Jørgen N. Kalvehaven; Astra Everson = Astrid Håversen Østerhus; Oula Helverson = Ola Halvorsen Kønnesstad; Ousal Anderson = Osul Andersen Løvaasen; Lose Hoverson = Lars Håversen Stensvand; Andis Nelson = Anders N. Holte. - In the Army: Simon Simonsen Kulaasen, Torjus Gundersen Hardeberg, Kristen Bjellandslien, Lars Nielsen Håbestand (Lewis Nelson). Bent Hansen Molland probably continued his work as a shoemaker.

⁵³ Copies of microfilm supplied by the State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia, MO.



The Pettis-Nelson homestead, southeast of St. Joseph, MO. The house was built from bricks by George Nelson on his father's land ca. 1870. Own photo, 2006.

9.8 A CASE STUDY: PEDER NELSON – THE FARMER

By the time Peder Nilsen Kalvehaven and the rest of the Norwegian group arrived at the Roubidoux Landing, much of the land near St. Joseph had been claimed or sold. At this point Nielsen Kalvehaven had simplified and Americanized his name to Peder Nelson, possibly after having witnessed what American authorities might do to complicated Norwegian spelling.⁵⁴

Rather than embarking upon a “costly and difficult” quest for the free land they had hoped for, the immigrants chose to stay and purchase readily available land from speculators and from those who were eager to sell before heading for the western frontier.⁵⁵ Shortly after arriving in Buchanan County, a number of the families in the Nelson party had purchased partially cultivated land complete with buildings about six miles southeast from St. Joseph. Peder Nelson’s cousin, Osul Nielsen Enge (to be known as Osul Nelson), had bought 160 acres approximately seven miles south-southeast of the little town. The partly cultivated acreage contained a house and a stable.⁵⁶ Peder Nelson, cautious and discriminating, took longer to choose a site. The family rented quarters for some months at Dug Cut, while Peder Nelson examined a number of tracts, explaining later that he was very careful to make the best choice:

We were now exceedingly happy to have arrived successfully, and that a fertile and smiling land lay open to us, the families in our company at once bought land, 6 to 7 miles from town, with houses and some cultivated land; but I did not finish that quickly. I was on several occasions bargaining, but it did not come to anything because there were so many properties to choose between and I felt I had to see them all to make the best choice, and though the soil is very fertile, one piece of land may be better than another, and I wanted to buy land with houses ... as good a bargain as possible, and the best land possible. The longer I waited, the worse it got, I was very careful and anxious to avoid buying a place I would not like, so it took me 2 ½ months before I purchased a farm section 3 ½ miles from town, with a house and cultivated land, and paid \$ 120 for the claim.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ In the 1850 census returns for Missouri, “Ober”, “Gel”, “Canen”, and “Goena” are listed as Norwegian first names; such names are unknown in Norway.

⁵⁵ Peder Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 6.

⁵⁶ Osul Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 1.

⁵⁷ Peder Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 6. Despite Nelson’s preference for free, uncultivated land, the partial development of the land clearly provided an important advantage in site selection. As Clarence H. Danhof notes, the fertility of the soil and the desirability of the markets were easier to assess if the land was partially developed. Furthermore, such farms were more quickly productive and could save farmers years of work. *Change in Agriculture: The Northern United States, 1820 – 1870* : 126 – 127.

After much deliberation, Peder Nelson paid \$120 in 1847 for a quarter-section of the Platte purchase, located three and a half miles southeast of St. Joseph. The tract Nelson chose has Marshall and Contrary silt loam, well-drained soils especially suited for corn and small grains.⁵⁸ The property came with a house and tilled land. The house must have been unsatisfactory, for he bought a finished, one-room log house with a lean-to and moved it to the site, supplementing it with a washhouse. Family sources in St. Joseph believe that the log-house was located near the current family cemetery, and was used for community meetings and the early Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church. Excavations for a cellar and a well near the house followed soon after. Within the year, Nelson paid \$25 for the claim to an adjacent quarter-section of land, and \$ 500 for the claim to two quarter-sections containing a house and cultivated land.⁵⁹ He now owned 800 acres of prairie and woodland, indeed a considerable holding for a recent immigrant. Such investments may also confirm the family tradition that he was a fairly wealthy man when he arrived in America, family legend hints that he brought with him the improbable sum of \$30,000.

Nelson's first livestock purchases were typical for the period. He bought a team of horses and a wagon for \$20, seven cows for \$69, two span of oxen for \$70, 35 pigs for \$36, and forty-eight chickens and two turkeys for \$4.⁶⁰ Two more teams of oxen were added in the spring. The horses (not yet much used as motive power in farming) were probably used for transportation. The oxen served as draft animals, with Nelson using five or six yoke of oxen to pull the plough.⁶¹

Oxen were "typical work animals of pre-commercial farming."⁶² The hardy, low-maintenance animals matured rapidly, aged well, could pull heavy loads, and were easily trained. In old age they served as food for the family, or could be sold for slaughter.⁶³ Hogs and cattle made profitable use of Nelson's corn and other grain crops. In addition to being sold for slaughter, the cows provided breeding stock, meat for the family, and dairy products

⁵⁸ Soil Conservation Service, *Soil Survey of Buchanan County, Missouri* (National Cooperative Soil Survey and U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1989): 5. It would have been difficult for Nelson to make a truly bad choice. The St. Joseph area contained large quantities of easily tillable, nutrient-rich loess soil, well-suited for the growing of wheat, corn, oats, and fruit. Also known as *sugar soil* in reference to its fertility, *loess* (derived from German meaning "loose") is a fine yellowish soil transported by the wind. Mixed with humus and silt it is very fertile. *New Webster's Dictionary* (Danbury, CT: Lexicon Publications, 1992): 582.

⁵⁹ Peder Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 6.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.* Nelson owned a smaller plough than his cousin Osul Nelson, who owned a "huge plough drawn by 8-10 oxen." Osul Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 1.*

⁶² Danhof, *op. cit.*: 141.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

for both consumption and sale. Hogs could also be sold, but at first were primarily used in the form of salt pork as a source of food.⁶⁴ Chickens and eggs were also both sold and eaten by the family.⁶⁵

Nelson's farm equipment purchases were also standard for the period. He paid \$26 for a wagon to go with the wheels brought from Norway, \$12 for a saddle, and \$14 for a plough (probably of steel). In the spring he added a number of smaller tools and implements.⁶⁶

From the 1830s through the 1860s, Missouri farms were only slowly evolving from self-sufficient operations to for-profit concerns that secondarily produced necessities for the family. Through the 1860s, Missouri was typical of the rest of the country in seeing the rise of the "businessman-farmer", whose goal was to grow enough produce to sell, as well as the increasing division of labour and the use of labour-saving innovations.⁶⁷

Thus, like nearly all first-year farmers, the Nelsons were barely able to provide food for themselves. The year was busy, but they suffered several hardships that hindered their progress. Nelson broke and sowed ten acres for wheat and twenty acres for corn, but he did not have time to split rails to build livestock pens and the free-ranging cattle and hogs ate his first corn and wheat crops. He and his son Jørgen (George) were often ill that winter and had to hire men to help; however, they still managed to cut nearly eight thousand rails needed to fence in 45 acres of the land. Their hogs increased to more than a hundred head, a surplus that enabled them to sell some of them, but most of the pigs were too young to butcher.⁶⁸ The family supplemented its diet with the abundant wild fruits or berries that grew nearby and with garden crops. Nelson hoped to raise enough to feed the family by fall of 1848, but expected to have little surplus to sell.⁶⁹

Peder Nelson accepted the difficulties of the early years rather philosophically. He indicated that he was undergoing a typical "purgatory" through which all immigrants must

⁶⁴ David D. March notes that pioneer families ate "prodigious quantities" of salt pork. *The History of Missouri, Vol. I* (New York and West Palm Beach: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1967): 631.

⁶⁵ Peder Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 6.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Sally McMurry. *Families and Farmhouses in Nineteenth-Century America: Vernacular Design and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988): 57-58.

⁶⁸ Peder Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 6.* Osul Nelson noted that pork was so cheap (two cents per pound according to Peter Nelson) that it was more economical – and necessary – for immigrants to slaughter pigs for food rather than to sell them. Osul Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 1.*

⁶⁹ Peder Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 6.*

pass because of the unfamiliar living conditions, methods of work, and language – a state further complicated for Nelson by his family’s illness during most of that first year. Reiersen had warned, in language closely echoed by Nelson, that “[e]very pioneer must go through this natural and inevitable experience ... that tests their character and courage,” and even predicted that “winter illnesses” would strike the farmers or their children.⁷⁰ Despite such hardships, Osul Nelson wrote home that he and the other Norwegians in his party were well satisfied with their new lives. He maintained that Reiersen’s favourable account of America “was in accordance with the truth”.⁷¹

Those who in addition want to know something about America in general, should consult Gasmand’s and Reiersen’s descriptions, as I find their reports practically in all respects in accordance with the truth, in everything that I so far have experienced, so I assure you that I have often been surprised at reading in Reiersen’s guide how a man in such a short time has been able to collect that much information.

During the next two decades, Nelson continued to increase his farm lands and yields. His primary crops, typical for the region, were hemp, Indian corn, and wheat. The corn was generally used as fodder for livestock rather than for human consumption, and brought little on the market.⁷² The land had already been planted in hemp when he bought it. Hemp, along with tobacco, was the main commercial plantation crop north of the Missouri River; Missouri ranked second in the nation in hemp production from 1840-1860.⁷³ Like other small farmers throughout the country, he divided his farm labour during the year, alternating seed-time with harvest work. Nelson planted oats and barley in April, corn and hemp in May, wheat in August, and harvested the corn after Christmas.⁷⁴

This era saw the invention and increased use of mechanical agricultural machinery throughout the country. Missouri farmers only slowly adopted the farm implements and machinery that became available before 1860, however, and this also seems to be true of the Nelsons.⁷⁵ They, like other Missouri farmers, probably used steel ploughs, common and improved harrows, cultivators, and various types of seed sowers by 1860. Hay rakes,

⁷⁰ Reiersen, *Pathfinder*: 62.

⁷¹ Osul Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 1.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ March, *op. cit.*: 633.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*: 113.

⁷⁵ F. B. Mumford. “A Century of Missouri Agriculture“ *Missouri Historical Review* 15 (January, 1921): 37- 49.

threshing machines, and reapers were expensive and considered less essential.⁷⁶ In a letter home in 1848,⁷⁷ Peder Nelson noted that nearby farms had begun using threshing machines, and machines for breaking hemp. He does not mention owning them in 1848, which would not have been expected given his short tenure on the homestead. Given the increasing amounts of hemp he produced and the labour-intensive nature of its harvest, however, he probably purchased or borrowed a hemp-breaking machine at some point.

In 1849, just two years after purchasing his claim, Nelson owned 80 improved plus 890 unimproved acres used to harvest wood. His \$750 worth of livestock now included a horse, five cows, six working oxen, 30 head of cattle, and 30 swine.⁷⁸

In 1853, Nelson owned 320 acres: one quarter in Section 34 and one quarter in Section 35. In May of the next year, an acre of this land close to his house was designated as a family cemetery after daughter Sara died at the age of thirty. The family cemetery was a typical feature of the 19th century Midwestern agricultural landscape. Probably established for the Nelson family, the cemetery was eventually used by other Norwegian immigrants with ties and relations to the Nelson family.

By 1855, Peder Nelson paid taxes on five 160-acre tracts, plus one tract of 49.95 acres in Section 4, Township 56, Range 36. According to family accounts, he also owned at least two slaves valued at \$2,000 in 1855, and four years later, four slaves valued at \$3,500. In owning slaves, Nelson was typical of farmers in the region, for increasing numbers of slaves were imported before the Civil War to support the plantation economy of the Missouri River valleys. Slaves were commonly used to farm hemp, which required the hard work of breaking hemp and removing the pith.⁷⁹ As a slaveholder, Nelson was apparently an exception among Norwegian immigrants. It must be kept in mind, however, that immigrants tended to adopt the practises of the areas in which they settled. Nearly all Norwegian immigrants settled in the northern states in which slavery was discouraged, and the settlers no doubt followed custom. In Missouri in the 1840s, settlers north of the Missouri River were primarily from the northern states and therefore tended not to be slave owners. Nelson, however, settled in a section of the state in which slavery was commonplace because of hemp production, and probably because homesteaders often came from southern states like Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and

⁷⁶ McCandless, op. cit.: 46-47.

⁷⁷ Peder Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 6.

⁷⁸ *Agricultural Schedules, 1850*.

⁷⁹ McCandless, op. cit.: 60.

Kentucky.⁸⁰ It is likely that he merely adopted the practises of his locality. Two of Nelson's slaves reportedly fled one night with Nelson's horses and wagon, plus bacon, ham, and other provisions, but returned to the farm fairly soon after. The Nelsons evidently treated them well, for the freed slaves lived the remainder of their lives on the farm, spoke a few words of Norwegian, and two of them were buried in the family cemetery.

By 1860, the 66-year-old Peter Nelson owned two hundred improved acres and eight hundred unimproved acres. The Federal Census for that year gives his real estate value as \$5,000, and his personal estate value as \$5,000.⁸¹ The value of his farm implements and livestock had increased only by \$50 and \$25, respectively, from the previous decade. To his crop production he added two hundred bushels of oats (typically used for livestock fodder), 50 bushels of Irish potatoes, 80 bushels of rye, and two tons of hay.

His production of "dew-rotted" hemp had increased from the five tons in 1850 to 31 tons.⁸² To his livestock he added four mules and two more working oxen, but he owned one less milk cow and twenty less cattle. Mules were a common form of livestock during the period of pre-mechanized farm machinery, because they were strong, could be used to pull or carry, could suffer exposure to harsh weather, were relatively immune from disease, and were easy to feed.⁸³ The addition of mules could indicate that he had acquired some newer farm machinery, which used horses and mules rather than the slower oxen. At this date the Census recorded only two grown children remaining living at the Nelson farmstead: his son-in-law, 26-year-old "Goostev" (Gustav) and his 26-year-old daughter "M.C." (Maren Kristine/ Mary Christina). Mary Christina eventually married Frederick Weddle (Vedel Clausen), a Danish immigrant who had settled in St. Joseph with his father. Another daughter, Laura, also

⁸⁰ The 1860 census from Buchanan County, Missouri shows that more than 2,000 slaves lived in Buchanan County at the start of the Civil War, although less than 10% of Missourians had slaves in 1860. Of those, fewer than 30% owned more than five slaves. *History of Buchanan County and St. Joseph, Missouri* (St. Joseph, MO: 1915): 271 and March, op. cit.: 812.

⁸¹ The census-taker recorded his real estate value \$ 50,000, undoubtedly a clerical error, as his real estate worth ten years later was recorded at \$ 5,000.

⁸² Dew-rotted hemp was left in the field to decompose, making it less labour-intensive than processed, water-rotted hemp, but also less valuable on the market. More than eighty per cent of the hemp sold by Missourians was dew-rotted.

March, op. cit.: 635.

⁸³ Perry McCandless. *A History of Missouri: 1820 to 1860* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1988): 50; and March, op. cit.: 642.

In other parts of the country, horses were taking the place of oxen. Compared to both mules and oxen, however, horses were more expensive and less practical to raise. They matured more slowly than oxen, and were of little value once their working life was over. They were also more prone to injury, and required greater care than either mules or oxen. Danhof, op. cit.: 142.

The expense of horses, and Missouri's state as a major mule producer in the mid 1800s, would seem to explain why Peter Nelson opted for mules.

married a native of Norway, Ole Stenson (Stiansen), who was a prosperous farmer in Center Township, St. Joseph.⁸⁴ In 1847, daughter Aaselle Elise had married James W. Pettis, a Prussian who had been on the *Izette* to New Orleans. The couple moved to Peder Nelson's farm, and settled on the north part of it. According to family legend, the East Prussian man, whose original name was James Wilhelm Stoffelragen, was second mate on the ship which carried the Nelsons from Le Havre.⁸⁵ On the trip he fell in love with Peter's daughter. Since neither of them spoke English, or the other's language, he purportedly courted her by throwing sticks at her, a tactic that unsurprisingly did not work at first. Peder Nelson was not at all pleased with this foreigner, and it was only after the Prussian had walked the distance from New Orleans to Missouri that he consented to give away his daughter to this worthy man.

The accounts of his name change to Pettis vary. Some accounts hold that he stole the passport of someone named "Peters", which he pronounced "Pettis" and took it as his official surname. Family tradition maintains that there was a small house on the farmstead which predated the Civil War, but the newlyweds built a bigger house. This larger home burned down in 1916.

By 1870, the aging Peder Nelson had turned over forty improved and sixty unimproved acres to his 37-year-old son George (Jørgen), who had returned to live on the farm.⁸⁶ George had gone to California in 1853 for the Gold Rush, and worked there in mining before returning to St. Joseph in 1861. A contemporary history of St. Joseph described George Nelson's farm as containing one hundred acres "all of which is well improved."⁸⁷

Peder himself owned only 40 improved and 40 unimproved acres in 1870, and by this time seems to have divided his costs in half with George. George owned only two horses, so he must have used his father's mules and oxen, and helped in the production of winter oats and wheat. Peder Nelson's real estate worth is listed in the 1870 census as \$4,000, and George's as \$5,000; the former's personal value is \$3,000, and the latter's \$1,400. George may also have helped pay the wages of an 18-year-old farm-hand, the son of foreign-born parents. George is listed as the only producer of Irish potatoes and hemp. By this time, hemp

⁸⁴ Chris L. Rutt. *History of Buchanan County and the City of St. Joseph and Representative Citizens, 1826 to 1904* (Chicago, IL: Biographical Publishing Company, 1904): 439.

⁸⁵ His name was definitely difficult to pronounce, so the Nelson children called him "Stockfish".

⁸⁶ The 1870 census lists Peter Nelson as head of household, and George as a resident/ family member.

⁸⁷ *History of Buchanan County* (St. Joseph, MO: 1881; reprint Cape Girardeau, 1947): 838-839.

had become a much less important crop for the family, with George producing only one ton instead of the forty-one tons of 1860. The market for hemp had peaked in Missouri in 1860, then sharply declined during the Civil War, never fully to recover.⁸⁸ In 1870 in Missouri, corn was the most important crop; four times as much of it was grown as oats, the second most important crop. Production of both oats and wheat climbed, a response to demand and the availability of transportation.⁸⁹

The Nelsons' production reflects the changing emphasis to a market-driven agricultural economy. By 1870, the Nelsons had planted apple trees, which were probably mostly for their own use as the \$15 harvest was fairly modest. From another perspective, the growing of fruit must have brought forth memories of Peder Nelson's famous "Dolholt" pears grown on his farm in Norway. The value of their farm produce that year totalled \$800.⁹⁰

George built a brick house as a wedding-present for his Norwegian-born wife, Osa (Åse) Thompson, who was 20 years his junior. George sited the house on one of the highest points of the rolling farm land; the highest section was occupied by the family cemetery in the southeast corner. The importance of proper site of farmhouses and their accompanying farmyards had become increasingly clear to progressive farmers of the period. One aspect of establishing the most economically efficient farm possible was careful planning of the spatial arrangement of farm buildings. A central location, preferably on a slightly hilly spot, was promoted in several agricultural publications as ideal.⁹¹ George was fortunate that the topography on the Nelson farmstead presented nearly such a location. Although located on the northern edge, the hill containing the farmhouse was near the centre of the east/ west axis. This helped reduce travel across the agricultural fields, but primarily gave the farmer the ability to literally oversee his domain from all directions.

In 1870, the 51-year-old James Pettis owned 160 improved acres and 40 unimproved (woodland) acres. The household consisted of his wife Eliza (Aaselle Elise) and eight children. Pettis seems to have been more prosperous than the Nelsons at that date, for the cash value of the farm was \$16,500, whereas the value of George and Peder Nelson's holdings combined totalled \$10,000. This may partly be explained by the family stories that Pettis

⁸⁸ March, op. cit.: 636.

⁸⁹ William E. Parrish. *A History of Missouri: 1860 to 1875* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1973): 230.

⁹⁰ *Agricultural Schedules for the State of Missouri, Buchanan County, 1870.*

⁹¹ McMurry, op. cit.: 63-64.

operated a small saw-mill on the property. Pettis owned farm implements and machinery valued at \$250 in 1870. His livestock holdings were very similar to those of the Nelson's, except that he owned two more oxen and 70 more swine. He did not harvest hemp, but his crops were otherwise nearly identical to the Nelson's and thus were more typical of the rest of the state. He varied only in the output of some of the crops. He produced 400 bushels of winter wheat to the Nelson's 100, 400 bushels of oats to their 150, and \$50 worth of fruit to their \$15 worth. Because he was assisted by his 17-year-old son Frederick, Pettis paid only \$200 for farm labour wages compared to the Nelson's combined \$ 600. His output that year was valued at \$ 1,485.⁹²

By the 1880s, the national farm population was rapidly being outstripped by urban population growth. St. Joseph was entering its "Golden Age", and was rapidly growing.⁹³ However, the 1870s had been bad years for farming in Missouri. Throughout the country, farmers had to deal with industrialization and mechanization "which frequently confused them."⁹⁴ A plague of locusts decimated the crops in 1875.⁹⁵ The decade also had a drought which in turn was followed by too much rain. The nationwide financial panic of 1873 added to the farmers' woes.⁹⁶ The Nelsons concentrated on maintaining their existing farmland holdings rather than acquiring more land. In 1880, Peder Nelson, 86 years old and recently widowed, owned 80 improved acres and 20 unimproved acres of woodland, plus 400 acres of unimproved, non-wooded land. The value of his farm is listed as \$5,000, the same as 20 years ago. Farmland was apparently not appreciating in value as was the real estate in nearby St. Joseph. The worth of his implements is listed as only \$75, and his livestock as \$700. He recorded \$40 worth of building and repairs that year. Peder Nelson produced only 400 bushels of Indian corn and ten bushels of apples worth \$5. George, listed separately, had only 100 improved, tilled acres, and a farm valued at \$ 2,500.⁹⁷

In 1880, the George Nelson household included his wife Osa, their three children, Osa's unmarried sister Lizzie, and a farm-hand. George does not appear to have invested heavily in modern farm machinery, for the value of his implements is listed at \$ 100. At

⁹² *Agricultural Schedules, 1870.*

⁹³ Sheridan A. Logan. *Old St. Jo: Gateway to the West, 1799-1932.* (St. Joseph, MO: Platte Purchase Publishers, 1979): 158.

⁹⁴ Parrish, op. cit.: 232.

⁹⁵ In 1867 Osul Nelson describes a similar invasion of locusts the previous year. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 3.*

⁹⁶ Parrish, op. cit.: 232.

⁹⁷ *Agricultural Schedules, 1880.*

\$400, his livestock was not much more than that of earlier decades on his father's farm, consisting of one horse, two mules, four milk cows, one bull, five calves, 30 swine, and 135 poultry.⁹⁸

In 1880, George Nelson produced 1,459 bushels of Indian corn, three tons of hemp, 500 bushels of wheat, and 25 bushels of Irish potatoes. The regional variation in their production was hemp, apparently still a lucrative crop. The 1880 Agricultural Census shows that 29 acres were planted in corn, 23 acres in wheat, one-half acre in potatoes, and one acre in 62 apple trees. Butter production is shown as 200 pounds. Nelson paid \$ 500 in farm labour wages that year.

The Nelsons' failure to adopt the latest mechanical innovations of the era was typical of traditional farmers. "Acceptance of an innovation (by most farmers) tended to be limited and slow. To some extent the barriers to change were physical: many farmers, for example, did not have enough tilled acreage to justify the use of a new implement."⁹⁹ Another factor, and probably more likely in the case of the Nelsons, was "rigid adherence to routines founded on and sanctified by past experiences."¹⁰⁰ Although their retention of traditional agricultural practises was typical, the Nelsons' production during the previous 20 years reflected in part the increasing specialization of Midwestern agriculture, with farmers relying upon corn and winter wheat in particular.¹⁰¹

By 1880, James Pettis, now 60, was widowed. A daughter tended the house, while his son Peter assisted with the farming. James, 13, and Ida, ten, still lived there, as did his grandson Alonzo, seven. Also living with them was a Danish farm-hand. That year Pettis farmed 80 improved acres and owned 40 acres classified as permanent meadows/ pastures/ orchards. The value of the farm had decreased to \$5,000. He paid \$150 for farm labour, which he employed for 50 weeks that year.¹⁰²

Peder Nelson died in 1884, at the age of 90. Family tradition holds that he spent his five last years living in his son's brick house, although the 1880 Census Returns still lists the two as having separate households. On January 18, 1884, *The St. Joseph Daily Herald*

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Danhof, op. cit.: 279.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ McMurry, op. cit.: 94.

¹⁰² *Agricultural Schedules, 1880.*

announced in a short obituary that “Peter Nelson died on the 16th inst. at the residence of his son George, a few miles southeast of the city, at the ripe old age of four score and ten.” Pointing out that Nelson had devoted his life to farming, until bad eyesight forced him to retire from work, *The Herald* lastly reports that “he was well-respected by all who knew him, and his word was as good as his bond.” On the same day, *The Gazette* printed an obituary which was more personal, and signed by A.M.S., Arthur M. Spencer, Anders Nelson’s son-in-law:

He was a good model, good man, in his sphere – just and generous. He acquired a large estate and always conferred benefits on his children, grand-children and neighbors as he went along. His hand was never shut. Every one loved to call him Uncle Peter. He retained his mental faculties, of no common order, cheerful and good all the days of his advanced years, and was a genial companion for young and old people. Yes, he is dead; but he has not lived in vain, for he left the world by his example and good works better than he found it. ... Peter Nelson was a man without hidden purpose or deceit.

His sons and descendants continued to farm the land during the third stage of Missouri agriculture, from 1887-1920. This period was characterized by the even more widespread use of labour-saving machinery, the improvement of domestic animals, and the application of scientific methods of farming, all of which increased the value of the land. Later on, the Nelsons switched to dairy production, but were also under severe attacks from the ever increasing mechanization and the tendency to increase the size of farms. Many rural people moved off their farms, particularly in the years 1919-1960.¹⁰³ From 1900-1920, the number of farms in Missouri decreased from nearly 285,000 to approximately 263,000, due mainly to increase in farm size from consolidation.¹⁰⁴ The Nelson and Pettis farms were anomalies, in that they were able to continue with their single-family agricultural practises, albeit with ever decreasing amounts of farm land.

¹⁰³ Rickard S. Kirkendall, *A History of Missouri: 1919 to 1953* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri, 1986): 16.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*: 17-18.

9.8.1 PEDER NELSON'S WILL

The following sections of the will show clearly that Peder Nelson was still a man of considerable property at the time of his death in 1884. The document also gives the distribution of his various tracts of land and cash fortune to his children.¹⁰⁵

I desire that all my just debts be paid including my funeral expenses.

I give a square acre of land for a family burying ground forever said acre being in the South East quarter of Quarter 27 of Township 57 of Range 35.

I devise give and bequeath to my son Nels P. Nelson 20 acres of land ..., also 37 acres of land, also 60 acres of land, all in Buchanan County, Mo. Also the west half of the North West Quarter of Section 32 in Doniphan County, in the state of Kansas. I further give to my son Nels P. Nelson Three hundred dollars in money.

I devise give and bequeath to my son George A. Nelson 20 acres of land out of the undivided Quarter Section that I own in partnership with my son Nels P. Nelson, also 20 acres south of and adjoining the one hundred acres now owned by my said son George, also the west half of the south west quarter of section 34 of Township 57, also 46 35/100 acres being lot number three of the south west fractional quarter of section 4 Township 56, all in Buchanan County, Missouri. I further give to my said son the sum of Nine Hundred Dollars in Money.

I devise give and bequeath to the children of my deceased daughter Sarah Danervick to wit Mathias Danervick, Peter Danervick and William Danervick the following to wit as Mathias Danervick is now indebted to me in a considerable sum of money I hereby release him from all said indebtedness this release to be considered the full amount of his interest in my estate except as hereinafter mentioned.

To Peter Danervick and William Danervick, I devise give and bequeath jointly Eighty acres of land in Doniphan County in the state of Kansas and I further release them from all

¹⁰⁵ *Proof of Will*, Probate Court of Buchanan County, signed by Henry Tutt, Probate Judge, July 3, 1884. Printed by courtesy of Catherine McAdams, present owner of the Nelson-Pettis homestead, St. Joseph, MO.

indebtedness to me from any account whatever and give them jointly Three Hundred Dollars in money.

I give devise and bequeath to the children of my deceased daughter Aaselle Eliza Pettus forty acres of land in section 34 of Township 57 ... in Buchanan County, Missouri and fifteen hundred dollars in money.

I give devise and bequeath to my daughter Maren Christein Weddel wife of Frederick Weddel the East half of the North west quarter of section 32 of township 3 ... in Doniphan County in the state of Kansas and Fifteen Hundred Dollars in money, she to have one half the building on the Kansas land willed to her.

I devise, give and bequeath to my daughter Olivia Steinen the east half of the south west quarter of section 34 in Township 57, also forty acres of land ... of section 35, Township 57, also forty acres of section 3, Township 56, all in Buchanan County, in the state of Missouri and fifteen hundred dollars in money.

*I hereby appoint my two sons George A. Nelson and Nels P. Nelson, Executors of this my last Will and testament hereby revoking all former wills by me made.
In Witness Whereof I have hereunto set my hand this third day of August, A. D. 1881.*

On February 2, 1884, the Probate Court issued the following survey of Peder Nelson's real estate:¹⁰⁶

<i>ACRES</i>	<i>REAL ESTATE</i>
<i>80</i>	<i>Township 34, Doniphan County, KS</i>
<i>160</i>	<i>Township 3, Doniphan County, KS</i>
<i>80</i>	<i>Township 4, Doniphan County, KS</i>
<i>74</i>	<i>Township 57, Buchanan County, MO</i>
<i>6</i>	<i>Township 57, Buchanan County, MO</i>
<i>60</i>	<i>Township 57, Buchanan County, MO</i>

¹⁰⁶ The table is not included in the original court material; in addition the text has been somewhat simplified. Peder Nelson's properties were first and foremost centred in St. Joseph (Townships 56 and 57), but also to a perhaps surprising degree in the Troy area in Doniphan County, Kansas. The total acreage according to this survey from 1884 was 630 18/100.

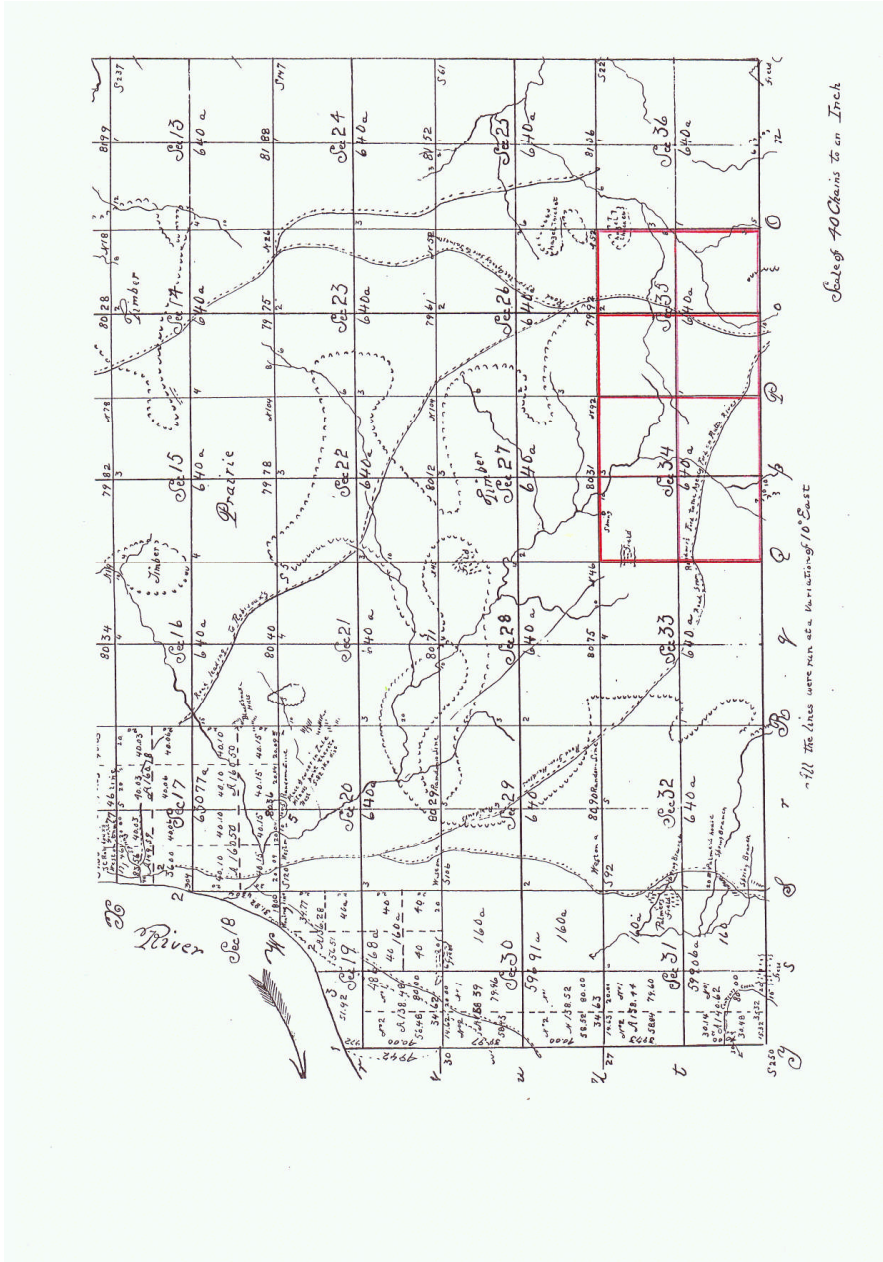
20	<i>Township 57, Buchanan County, MO</i>
160	<i>Township 57, Buchanan County, MO</i>
40	<i>Township 57, Buchanan County, MO</i>
46 95/100	<i>Township 56, Buchanan County, MO</i>
40	<i>Township 56, Buchanan County, MO</i>
80	<i>Township 57, Buchanan County, MO</i>
43 23/100	<i>Township 57, Buchanan County, MO</i>
	<i>Personal property in the total appraised sum of \$10,417.84</i>



Old photograph possibly showing Peder Nelson's first house in Buchanan County, situated southeast of St. Joseph. By courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO.



Peder Nelson in his old age. Photograph taken in the 1880s. By courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO.



Copy of original plats, 1855. Township 57N, Range 35W. By courtesy of Central Library, St. Joseph, MO. Peder Nelson (Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven) and his family settled in sections 34 and 35, to the southeast of the town centre.

9.8.2. THE NELSON CEMETERY

As stated in his will, Peder Nelson had set aside “a square acre of land for a burying ground”, on a hill-top near his home, with an extended view into the state of Kansas. His daughter Sarah was the first to be buried there, and in the decades to follow, 96 more graves were placed in the family cemetery. The cemetery may initially have been intended to give the last resting place for members of the Nelson family, but as it stands now, the headstones give a striking picture of a rather small community where family ties have combined and become intertwined with people from outside the Norwegian sphere, through the last 150 years.¹⁰⁷

The cemetery is found off Mansfield Road, St. Joseph, and contains the following names:

Nelson, Nels P.

27 Feb 1828 – 5 Nov 1888

Nelson, Enger Tominia

30 Aug 1838 – 1 Jun 1927

Nelson, Leroy

11 Jan 1883 – 1 Jun 1927

Nelson, Cora A.

1860 – 1941

Nelson, Leonora

1864 – 1958

Nelson, Peter

10 jun 1794 – 16 Jan 1884

Nelson, Karen

24 Feb 1794 – 29 Oct 1875

Cox, Kate S.

1859 – 1937

Cox, Harry A.

1855 – 1930

Pettis, James Wilhelm

19 Dec 1817 – 25 Aug 1898

Pettis, Elisie

Nelson, Pewton Pierce

27 May 1876 – 1 Jul 1967

Nelson, Jessie Elizabeth

22 Nov 1877 – 21 Dec 1903

The following names are engraved on large Nelson marble:

Nelson, Harry Alfred

- 24 Nov 1888

Potter, Catherine

Talented musician. Lover of flowers

28 Sep 1889 – 29 Oct 1940

Harvey, Catherine Virginia Nelson

- 16 Feb 1915

Harvey, Mary Ann

- 21 Mar 1942

Harvey, Lloyd Edward

- 18 Sep 1944

Nelson, Drew

¹⁰⁷ The survey of headstones and their inscriptions is supplied by Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO.

<i>10 May 1826 – 11 Jan 1873</i>	<i>- 2 Jul 1946</i>
<i>Dannevik, Sarah</i>	<i>Nelson, Capt. John Henry</i>
<i>Aug 1824 – May 1854</i>	<i>Co F 3 Inf. 2 US Div. WW II.</i>
<i>Stinson, Osburn Steward</i>	<i>Killed near Wonju, Korea. Dis.</i>
<i>1861 – 25 Nov 1862</i>	<i>Service</i>
<i>Nelson, Peter Lee</i>	<i>Purple Heart</i>
<i>- 14 Feb 1870</i>	<i>12 Jul 1920 – 16 Feb 1951</i>
<i>Stinson, Ida May</i>	<i>Guilmette, Mary Potter Nelson</i>
<i>23 Oct 1865 – 4 Feb 1872</i>	<i>Pampas, Texas. Best citizen 1940</i>
<i>Nelson, Ezette Tomenine</i>	<i>4 Mar 1925 -</i>
<i>1873 – 21 Sep 1874</i>	<i>Nelson, Catherine Ruth</i>
<i>Nelson, Newton Pierce Jr.</i>	<i>29 Sep 1954 -</i>
<i>30 Aug 1902 – 22 Nov 1970</i>	<i>Nelson, Virginia Juliette</i>
<i>Nelson, Della D.</i>	<i>31 Jan 1958</i>
<i>27 Jul 1886 – 29 Mar 1967</i>	<i>-----</i>
<i>Nelson, Henry S.</i>	<i>Varner, Howard Clark</i>
<i>29 Sep 1883 – 2 Oct 1962</i>	<i>1871 - 1941</i>
<i>Nelson, Orion C.</i>	<i>Varner, Emma G.</i>
<i>3 Dec 1880 – 2 Oct 1962</i>	<i>1875 - 1965</i>
<i>Nelson, Irena M.</i>	<i>Henderson, Robert Edward</i>
<i>20 Sep 1874 – 7 Mar 1960</i>	<i>1866 - 1940</i>
<i>Nelson, George A.</i>	<i>Henderson, Kate S.</i>
<i>1 Sep 1830 – 25 Jul 1893</i>	<i>1870 -</i>
<i>Nelson, Osa</i>	<i>Henderson, Lalla Ruth</i>
<i>31 Jan 1850 – 27 Nov 1890</i>	<i>1899 -</i>
<i>Nelson, Edgar Adney</i>	<i>Thompson, Thomas N.</i>
<i>7 Apr 1886 – 19 Dec 1895</i>	<i>1852 - 1937</i>
<i>Stinson, Peder Dolholt</i>	<i>Pettis, A.</i>
<i>9 Apr 1863 – 8 Feb 1937</i>	<i>Pettis, Fred W.</i>
<i>Stinson, Ole O.</i>	<i>7 Jan 1853 – 8 May 1935</i>
<i>9 Oct 1830 – 19 Jan 1916</i>	<i>Larson, K.T.</i>
<i>Stinson, Laura Nelson</i>	<i>6 Sep 1819 – 2 May 1893</i>
<i>14 Feb 1832 – 4 Dec 1925</i>	
<i>Stinson, Kirby Orr</i>	

- 28 May 1868 – 2 Apr 1939
Pettis, James A.
 1887 – 1944
- Pettis, Allene*
 1862 –
- Howard, Paulena A.*
 28 Sep 1856 – 7 Mar 1888
- Stinson, Stian*
 2 Feb 1836 – 9 Feb 1857
- Hoverson, C. (a child)*
- Hoverson, Andrew A.*
 24 Sep 1832 – 23 Apr 1881
- Hoverson, Christianne*
 18 Dec 1797 – 27 Dec 1883
- Hoverson, Lars*
 21 Mar 1782 – 4 Jul 1869
- Hoverson, Ellen C.*
 1833 – 1912
- Hoverson, Hover*
 1822 – 1901
- Hoverson, Maren*
 1818 – 1865
- Hoverson, Joseph*
 1873 – 1874
- Thompson, Hans*
 1847 – 1866
- Dannevik, Wilfred*
 1881 – 1881
- Thompson, Elizabeth J.*
 1857 – 1926
- Thompson, Hans*
 7 Jun 1855 – 7 May 1862
- Thompson, Nels*
- Gray, Minerva C.*
 31 Mar 1855 – 17 Mar 1903
- Gray, Ben F.*
 29 Jun 1843 – 2 May 1899
- Larson, Vetura L.*
 1866 – 23 May 1890
- Weddle, Frederick*
 21 May 1829 – 25 Jul 1901
- Weddle, Mary Christina*
 24 May 1834 – 8 Feb 1913
- Weddle, Peter N.*
 19 Aug 1864 – 9 Apr 1904
- Weddle, Charlotte*
 12 Sept 1887 – 9 May 1930
- Weddle, Harold C.*
 16 Sep 1875 – 11 Dec 1934
- Weddle, Lillian M.*
 19 Apr 1882 – 16 Dec 1971
- Weddle, Ellen*
 1870 - 1946
- Weddle, Freddie*
 1862 - 1944
- Weddle, Mary Ann*
 10 Oct 1925 – 13 Oct 1925
- Weddle, Nelson Francis*
 18 Oct 1915 – 3 May 1916
- Plowman, Martin Oscar*
 1869 - 1931
- Plowman, Laura C.*
 1876 - 1966
- Spalburg, -*
 1877 - 1953
- Spalburg, Charles*

<i>23 Oct 1821 – 24 Mar 1876</i>	<i>1882 - 1956</i>
<i>Thompson, Ingeborg</i>	<i>Spencer, Arthur M.</i>
<i>1821 – 1904</i>	<i>1835 - 1909</i>
<i>Thompson, Hannah</i>	<i>Spencer, Grate M.</i>
<i>1863 – 1947</i>	<i>1842 - 1919</i>
<i>Thompson, Adeline M.</i>	<i>Spencer, Elizabeth</i>
<i>1860 - 1938</i>	<i>1880 – 1912</i>
<i>Spencer, Frank Nelson</i>	<i>Spencer, Charles A.</i>
<i>1886 – 1968</i>	<i>1874 - 1936</i>
<i>Spencer, Ada Morgan</i>	<i>Spencer, Josephine</i>
<i>1890 – 1932/1912</i>	<i>1891 - 1947</i>
<i>Spears, Idena A.</i>	<i>Spencer, Charles Jr.</i>
<i>1863 – 1913</i>	<i>1923 –</i>

9.9 SCHOOL

When the settlers of the *Landvik*-group arrived in St. Joseph in 1847, there were no public schools in the town, in fact it would take more than ten years before public schools were in operation.¹⁰⁸ “Occasionally a free school would be taught for a month or two or for a sufficient length of time to absorb what was not wasted or lost of the city’s share of the public school fund.”¹⁰⁹ St. Joseph had only the organization of a county school district, and parents were only given the choice of a limited number of private and denominational schools for their children. Osul Nelson remarks in his letter from 1848 that a site had been set aside for a school (as the town was obliged to do), but the building had not yet started.¹¹⁰

*My daughters Gurine and Maren were in St. Joseph last winter, attending school for 3 months. I paid 3 dollars in wages for the school-keeper. They got board and lodging in return for working in their pauses for the landlord. Trine and Terje were also in school last autumn, 1 ½ mile from my home in the country, though it was to little avail since the teacher was no good.*¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Osul Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 1.*

¹⁰⁹ *History of Buchanan County and the City of St. Joseph and Representative Citizens:* 109.

¹¹⁰ In a township, sections 16 and 36 were reserved for school purposes. Rent money was supposed to finance the school system in the township.

¹¹¹ Osul Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 1.*

Until a board of public schools was established in 1860, five (and after some time, six) educational institutions catered for the needs of St. Joseph girls:

- *The Female Seminary* in St. Joseph, directed by Mrs. Israel Landis; the seminary was opened in 1845.
- Miss Mary Stone's *Catholic School*, also opened in 1845.
- *The Female Seminary*, led by the Rev. T.S. Reeve; the seminary opened in 1850.
- *The Academy of the Sacred Heart*; run by Catholic nuns, and established in 1853.
- *The St. Joseph Female High School*, opened in 1854.
- Dr. Charles Martin's *Young Ladies' Institute*, which opened in the 1870s.¹¹²

The pioneers may possibly have held hopes for their own Norwegian school, on the model of others, and more numerous settlements to the north. Rasmus Sunde states e.g. that the immigrant children in the 1840s and 50s primarily attended Norwegian schools which were mainly supposed to teach religion.¹¹³ In other colonies, parochial schools played an important role, both as regards formal training and the maintenance of their native language. The communities placed a tremendous importance on such schools and the effect such training might have on their children. In any case, such national institutions presupposed a stronger population basis than was the case in the St. Joseph settlement.¹¹⁴ Such plans for their own school were therefore dropped rather quickly, and the settlers chose a pragmatic path, even putting the standard of the school above their Protestant faith. It is remarkable that some of the children were given an education in Catholic institutions. In general, the immigrants of 1847 seem to have been bent upon adopting American practises also when school was concerned, and to give priority to the learning of English rather than the retention of their Norwegian language. In this respect they were certainly different from both other Norwegian settlements in Wisconsin and Minnesota, and Germans in Missouri, who made school and church a cultural battleground aimed at preserving the mother tongue.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Ibid.: 116.

¹¹³ Rasmus Sunde, op. cit.: 265.

¹¹⁴ Robert C. Ostergren, op. cit.: 229. In the Isanti area, the parochial "Swede school" initially offered instruction six months a year, concentrating on lessons from the Swedish Bible, psalm-book, grammar, and songs from the homeland. The Cambridge Lutheran Church tried to fight the "erosion of the Swedish language and culture." See also: Hans Norman and Harald Runblom. *Transatlantic Connections: Nordic Migration to the New World after 1800* (Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1987): 197.

¹¹⁵ Kamphoefner, op. cit.: 194.

Information of the school attendance of the Norwegian children during the pioneer phase is far from full, but on the basis of the pioneer letters and family tradition collected by Nora C. Nelson, a rough and inadequate picture emerges:

Olava Nelson was placed in Miss Stone's private, Catholic school with her sister Maren Christine soon after Peder Nelson was located on his farm. Later on, Maren Christine went on to another Catholic school, the convent institution of the Academy of the Sacred Heart. Osul Nelson also reported home in a letter that his younger daughters would attend a private school in St. Joseph; the school answers this description. Later, when Olava Nelson had children in her marriage with Ole O. Stinson, the daughters, Kate Sophronia, Emma Olava, and Ida Olena, were sent to the Young Ladies' Institute in St. Joseph.

In 1862, Nels Thompson in Doniphan County wrote to his brother-in-law in Norway, briefly mentioning the school situation for his children:

*Aase and Guttorm have attended school fairly often, so that Aase both reads and writes Norwegian and English, Guttorm, on the other hand, reads only English, though we have not had more than 3 months' school a year since we came to Kansas, but we hope it will improve.*¹¹⁶

Details about the school days of the other immigrant children do not exist, but it seems fair to assume that they followed in the footsteps of the children mentioned. It is then clear that their parents were pragmatic adults who appreciated the quality of teaching and who realized that the mastery of a new language would be the door-opener into social acceptance and assimilation.

Their liberal attitudes towards the question of language may of course have resulted from the same pragmatic considerations: they were definitely a minority in the new land, it turned out to be both impossible and unpractical to uphold, or even establish, their own Norwegian school, and their first pastor, Peter Laurentius Larsen, showed the same liberal attitude concerning the issue of language, undoubtedly inspiring and colouring the views held by his flock. Karen Larsen writes in an article that the pastor's dominating passion was the spread of the gospel in its orthodox form. His mission was to lead the establishment of free Lutheran churches, where the liturgy and usages of the mother church in Norway should be preserved, although the language used must necessarily soon be English, for the sake of easy communication.¹¹⁷ Laurentius Larsen himself summarized this view:

¹¹⁶ Nels (Guttormsen) Thompson, 1862. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 16.

¹¹⁷ Karen Larsen. "The Adjustment of a Pioneer Pastor to American Conditions" *The Norwegian-American Historical Association* IV (1929): 2-3.

*National hatred and national prejudices must not even be mentioned among us. They are unchristian in themselves and simply ludicrous in this country, as all the nationalities here must after all in the end be assimilated into the English American. But the pure doctrine shall not be absorbed into any kind of American system. That shall stand though heaven and earth vanish and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. That is an inheritance of which we must not relinquish the smallest iota, even though we forget the language and customs of our ancestors.*¹¹⁸

9.10 IMMIGRANT CHURCHES

From the very beginning of Norwegian settlement in the United States, the church came to play the role of an institutional centre, as well as a central meeting point. With certain exceptions, most immigrants wanted a church in their midst, but it was of course only to be expected that a people reared in the tradition of a state church would meet with problems in establishing a free church in a strange country. Both structure and theological dogma were brought over from Norway, but saw a development which strayed from that of the Norwegian State Church. The Norwegian settlers came to America with a rich heritage of theological controversy, and transplanting these conflicts to American soil, enhanced the growth rather than suppressed it. On the one hand, many immigrants hoped that congregations in America should be organized after the traditional patterns of Norway. On the other hand, others were quite determined that a free church in America should represent a break with the same old traditions.¹¹⁹

In a somewhat simplified view, the immigrant churches might be characterized through some basic concepts. There is no doubt that the church played an important part in the lives of the immigrants, some would say a pivotal role, but historians have also emphasized the ethnic conflicts that accompanied the establishment of Norwegian congregations. Inter-ethnic conflicts were not only found among Norwegian immigrants, even in their hierarchical organization; Roman Catholic communities saw similar conflicts, often in terms of questions of church authority. One might add that such strife does not come as a surprise. The immigrant churches had basically cut their ties with their native European

¹¹⁸ Laurentius Larsen. "Skandinavisk-lutherske Menigheder" *Kirkelig Maanedstidende* (April, 1860): 54. My translation.

¹¹⁹ J. C. K. Preus. "From Norwegian State Church to American Free Church" *Norwegian-American Studies* 25 (1972): 186.

churches, and had to adjust themselves to a new situation with free membership, competing denominations, and a separation of church and state.¹²⁰

The Norwegian immigrant churches came to be closely associated with the celebration of Norwegian culture and the defence of the mother tongue. In a social perspective, they were established and functioned as important meeting places for Norwegians who were eager to exchange news and gossip, and to strengthen family and kinship ties. Unlike their native Lutheran State Church, membership in the new congregations was free, the ministers were called by the congregations, and the ministers were dependent upon the members for their salary. It was a democratic organization, very much coloured by American ideals, and which gave the settlers ministers who were more on an equal social footing, and decidedly removed from the upper-class, highly educated, often arrogant, and Danish-trained counterparts in Norway. At the same time, though, the loose organization may in part have contributed towards the many bitter conflicts which afflicted Norwegian congregations, often on the basis of different conceptions of church authority.

The Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, commonly known as the Norwegian Synod, was in many instances regarded as a “high church” alternative of Norwegian Lutheranism, not least by the many lay preachers like Elling Eielsen who travelled from settlement to settlement, and whose activities were regarded by many church leaders to be divisive and counter-productive in the effort to bring order and stability to the immigrant church.¹²¹ By its opponents the Synod was stigmatized as a bearer of “state church” ideas, bringing forth sore memories of a stale and dead spiritual life in the established church in Norway, and also deep-rooted prejudices against “officialdom” in Norway, including the clergy. From the beginning it associated closely with the German-American Missouri Synod. Many Norwegian pastors were trained at the Concordia Seminary in St. Louis in the 1860s, and many of them seem to have accepted conservative viewpoints consistent with those of the German Lutherans, but often at odds with those of their parishioners. One good example of such differences became apparent in 1861, when church members discovered that their ministers “offered theological justifications for slavery.”¹²² In the heat of the Civil War, parishioners united with a minority among the clergy to protest against the Synod’s official neutrality on the slave issue, and a few congregations left the Synod.

¹²⁰ Jon Gjerde. “Conflict and Community: A Case Study of the Immigrant Church in the United States” *Journal of Social History* 19, 4 (1986): 681.

¹²¹ Preus, op. cit.: 193

¹²² Jon Gjerde. “Conflict and Community: A Case Study of the Immigrant Church in the United States”: 689.

Other conflicts followed, but it was the schism in the 1880s over the question of predestination which undermined the Norwegian Synod. The Missouri Synod held the orthodox view that election for salvation was solely a question of God's grace. "The elect" had been chosen for salvation before their lives had begun, and leading good and pious lives was of little avail. This was of course a view which was close or even identical with dogma advocated by 17th century Calvinists and Puritans in New England, but which was literally unknown in the Norwegian Lutheran Church.

The opposing group which was formed, came to be known as the "Anti-Missourians", and eventually founded their own seminary in Northfield, Minnesota. The main division of Norwegian-American churches, however, drew a line between the ministers of the Missouri Synod and the Augustana Synod, which had been founded in 1860 as a Norwegian-Swedish church. The conflicts in Norwegian congregations over theological matters often distressed the communities, and there were many instances of a resulting social alienation and a fragmentation of congregations.¹²³

Jon Gjerde in his study of the Crow River settlement in Minnesota has duly underscored the important role played by religious conflict "in the development of an ethnic community resulting in restructured community relationships and more fully articulated theological constructs."¹²⁴ The Crow River congregation was among the 23 churches in Minnesota which split over the predestination controversy. The resulting sub-communities were not only distinct on the basis of theological differences, but also developed their peculiar temporal stances. The picture is complex and even incongruous, since the theological dividing lines were sometimes blurred, and the congregations tended to follow the voice of their leader. As a result, congregations took sides in the conflict without absolutely supporting their party in every theological detail. In Gjerde's view most congregations escaped the dramatic conflicts seen in the Crow River settlement because they were more homogeneous in the sense that they lacked the juxtaposition of culturally opposed sub-communities. In Crow River, immigrants from the "dark coastal strip" in Norway were clearly distinct from the immigrants who originated in inland districts to the north and east. Gjerde seems to be right in maintaining that "[it] was rather the combination of latent social divisions on the

¹²³ Hans Norman and Harald Runblom. *Transatlantic Connections: Nordic Migration to the New World after 1800* : 201.

¹²⁴ Gjerde. "Conflict and Community": 682.

congregational level interacting with a new meaning of religious doctrine that provided a flash point ignited by the election controversy.”¹²⁵

9.10.1. CONGREGATIONS IN BUCHANAN AND DONIPHAN COUNTIES

Until this day, the descendants of Peder Nelson in Buchanan County have staunchly upheld their membership in the *First Lutheran Church* in downtown St. Joseph. The present church building was dedicated in 1914, but the congregation – then known as the *First English Lutheran Church* – was organized in 1894. Prior to that year, the history of the various congregations in St. Joseph is a puzzle of more or less adequate information, with instances of scrupulously recorded meetings in the churches, as well as whole blocks of missing records for several years. On the basis of this somewhat uneven web of information, one might argue that religious life among the Norwegian settlers in St. Joseph did not openly reflect the schism which plagued other settlements in the 19th century. The people of the Buchanan County settlement seem to have gone about their business in a modest and quiet way, finding their religious sustenance in various denominations when they did not meet in each others’ homes and welcoming pastors with ties to the Missouri and Augustana Synods alike. In other words, there are no records of open religious conflict, and therefore no trace of the bitter quarrels which developed over questions of faith and theology in many Norwegian settlements. One explanation for this seemingly idyllic situation may of course be that the Norwegians in Missouri and Kansas often found themselves in mixed-nationality congregations, representing a minority, and willingly cooperating with other nationalities, e.g. Germans and Danes.

Miss Nora C. Nelson and Mr. George Nelson, however, were both much engaged in research into early Lutheranism in the St. Joseph area, and some information has been preserved through their efforts. They combed possible deposits among the oldest remaining settlers, and often secured little treasures for posterity.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Ibid.: 692.

¹²⁶ The late Nora C. Nelson in particular was an avid collector of church-related records. She drew on several sources, not least inscriptions and notes in old family bibles and psalm-books, but also had the opportunity to collect oral traditions from the senior members of the community. I am indebted for the kind permission to use her notes and unpublished manuscripts; in fact, they constitute a unique source of information. Without her efforts, the major part of these records and the whole local tradition surrounding them might have been lost. Nora C. Nelson was herself very much aware of the precarious situation concerning the material: in one of her comments she writes that she regrets the loss of many family bibles in fires and other accidents. The material is accessed through courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO. I am also indebted to the First Lutheran Church in St. Joseph for the opportunity to use some old membership records kept in the church.

The religious history in the Missouri/ Kansas area parallels the civic development. The churches grew with the district. First came missionary ministers, followed by congregations and church buildings, and afterwards came the expansion into the territories of Kansas and Nebraska. The picture is, however, slightly more complex, since the history of the neighbouring counties on both sides of the Missouri, was interwoven and parallel in religious matters. The same itinerant ministers served in both Doniphan and Buchanan Counties, and there were also examples of church members holding double memberships or shifting between the existent congregations. Nels P. Nelson of St. Joseph followed the Rev. Charles Martin to his new charge in Doniphan County, Kansas, and the six members of the Weddle family united with the same congregation.¹²⁷

In the 1860s, four congregations shared pastoral services because they were located within easy distance, and because the settlers were of the same geographical origin in Norway, and indeed mostly of the same tribe. These were the group near St. Joseph, Missouri, another in the Brush Creek area in Doniphan County, Kansas, a third near East Norway (Moray), Doniphan County, Kansas, and one near Robinson in Brown County, Kansas, called Upper Wolf.

In the years immediately following the settlement in 1847, services attended by the Norwegian settlers were held in the private homes of the pioneers. For 13 years they were without their own Norwegian-speaking pastor. When Laurentius Larsen came to visit them in 1860, he made the observation that they were rather poorly aware of denominational differences, and probably did not trouble themselves with theological interpretations. Osul Nelson summarized the situation in a letter to his family in Norway: "Proper churches are not yet built here in the country, but here and there, there are services held in people's houses, where the sermon is decided. This summer a church will be built 3 to 4 miles from my home. ... On the whole people are God-fearing, and religious, Sundays are very sacred."¹²⁸

No regular pastor is known before the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation was established in 1860. This is not to say that the settlers were without religious interests and longings. On the contrary, they brought with them a deep faith, and often wrote home that they hoped and worked for the establishment of their own church, preferably with a Norwegian minister. One might argue that church matters held precedence over school

¹²⁷ The Rev. Charles Martin would later (in the 1890s) urge the people from St. Joseph to return to that city and establish their own local church. The Norwegians followed his advice, and under his guidance *The First English Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of St. Joseph* was founded.

¹²⁸ Osul Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no 1.

matters, American schools were adequate, and the quality of English-taught instruction was evidently satisfactory.

Nels Thompson commented on the church situation in a letter from 1862:

Aase, as you know, was baptized in Norway, but Guttorm was baptized by a Norwegian [pastor] as we have no minister. Hans was baptized in St. Joseph by a Presbyterian minister by the name of Smith. Infant baptism is used by them in the same manner as by our Lutheran ministers. Elisebeth was baptized in the school house by a minister named Davis. Adeline was baptized here in Kansas by Professor Larsen, from Christiansand, who has visited us here 3 times, and Bishop Prous once.

I also want to tell you that we have fenced in a cemetery or burial ground, ½ acre, which Professor Larsen has consecrated for the Norwegians, and where there are already 8 buried people. We have also got an English Lutheran minister named Erharth, who seems to be a very god-fearing and decent man whom we all respect and love. 3 weeks ago we founded a Norwegian congregation, the twenty and some families in the neighbourhood, the same minister administers a church service every 4 weeks, Holy Communion twice a year, infant baptism and wedding ceremonies when asked to, and he catechizes the youngsters after each sermon.¹²⁹

In 1871, Anders Nelson made the following remark:

Last year we luckily got a Norwegian pastor. He is born in Hardanger, Norway, and has studied here at the Norwegian University. He is very gifted, and a true Christian servant and preacher, he shall serve here, but has also several places in Kansas to visit, so he is very busy.¹³⁰

Eight years later, the same writer complained about the difficulty in getting Norwegian ministers to come to the colony:

Our minister N. Christensen (son of Beruld Christensen Feskvasvøen,¹³¹ Froland Parish), is now leaving us to go to a new call in the state of Iowa. He has been our minister for about 3 ½ years. In his place, these congregations have summoned one of the students at St. Louis, who next year will graduate to become

¹²⁹ Nels Thompson, 1862. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 16.

¹³⁰ Anders Nelson, 1871. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 11. The pastor was probably G. M. Erdahl. He was born in Christiansand in 1840, and graduated from Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, in 1866.

¹³¹ See *Index*, 1844.

*minister and spiritual advisor here. Here is a marked shortage of ministers among the Norwegians, and it is a strange thing that not more would come from Norway to help us in this need.*¹³²

People back home in Norway were, not surprisingly, curious about the religious situation in the New World. One may only guess at what rumours and misconceptions had struck root in Hommedal Parish, and Peder Nelson was evidently challenged as to bring forth the truth in a letter from Ole Taraldsen in Landvik Parish. Peder Nelson responded fully in his answer, reassuring a worried correspondent, and taking the opportunity to comment on the advance of the Mormons, also among Norwegian settlers:

You also wanted to know something about religious customs here. They vary here according to the various sects; the practise of religion is free here and each man worships God in the manner he thinks best. ...Some let themselves be enrolled in churches in which they must not drink spirits, dance, or swear, unless they want to be expelled from the church again. To be sure, they are not warned to attend church, but they are expelled by the society, and that is a disgrace, since attending church is regarded as a great honour and holy duty. Otherwise, they are not finicky about customs here. By and large, people are regular in church attendance and very religious.

In passing I will note that they do not hold feasts at weddings, or childbirth, or funerals. A good many neighbours and acquaintances ordinarily come to follow the corpse to the grave, but afterwards, each one goes to his home. At weddings ... music and dancing are not used. This, I maintain, is much more sensible than the Norwegian custom and it gives the young people less taste for carousing.

The better educated are more independent in their customs. As far as I know they are all Christians and avow the teachings of Christ; even the Mormons with their morals and customs which break with these teachings, call themselves Christians and God's own people. They live in polygamy and get people to believe that they are certain to be saved when they enter into it, since a Mormon can always take one with him into Heaven or forgive his sins. ... If there is a man who has a wife who pleases the Prophet, he is ordered by God to hand her over. According to the newspapers, the Prophet had seventy children, which some people said happened all in one year.

¹³² Anders Nelson, 1879. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 13.

*I imagine that if you could lie well enough you could start a new religion, the more unreasonable a one the better. People want to be cheated, and that way they would not have to bother to go to Salt Lake City.*¹³³

In the history of the Lutheran churches in St. Joseph, Peder Nelson's name is conspicuously missing from all church membership records. It is possible that his expressed scepticism about some newer sects also had pervaded his old belief, and put him in a self-willed exile outside the organized church activities in the town, or perhaps he simply played an anonymous and withdrawn part in church activities.

On the other hand, several of the other pioneers in the settlement played an important and continuous role in the life of the Norwegian congregations. Records of some congregational meetings were found among papers left by Nora C. Nelson. The following examples from the 1870s are copied from her notes.¹³⁴

- March 5th, 1871:

Next there was an election of Trustees, with the following results: O. Stianson for 3 years, N.P. Nelson for two years, A. Nelson for 1 year.

Next a letter of call was extended to Pastor G. Erdahl, the Minister of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Doniphan, Brown, and Greenwood Counties in Kansas, with the understanding that it should be regarded as a regular service, that he visit this congregation every 4th week when he is in the northern part of Kansas.

The names of the Members of the Congregation are:

Anders Nelson (and wife), N.P. Nelson (with wife and 5 children), H. Hoverson (with 3 children), O.O. Stianson (with wife and 4 children), A.A. Hoverson (with wife and 1 child), Mathias Hoverson.

- July 23rd, 1871:

Since the congregation had subscribed to the erection of a Parsonage in Kansas, which work had been postponed because of the Minister's moving, the Minister urged the Congregation to let this subscription or a part thereof go to the University in Decorah. The subscriptions were as follows: Anders Nelson 20 dollars, Ole Stianson 20 dollars, Nels Nelson 20 dollars, Mathias Johannes Hoverson (from Conference Congregation in Kansas) 5 dollars.

- June 1st, 1873:

¹³³ Peder Nelson, date of letter unknown. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 17, Appendix A.*

¹³⁴ By courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO.

First an election of Trustees was held, with the following result: N.P. Nelson was again chosen for 3 years; Anders Nelson for 2 years. For the Minister's salary was subscribed as follows: Nels P. Nelson 20 dollars, Anders Nelson 15 dollars, H. Hoverson 10 dollars, O. Stianson 20 dollars, A. Hoverson 5 dollars, Math. Hoverson 5 dollars.

- September 29th, 1874:

Those who were present subscribed as follows for the support of the Minister: Anders Nelson 15 dollars, O. Stianson 25 dollars, Jorgen Nelson 10 dollars, Nels Thompson 5 dollars, Mrs. Weddle 1 dollar, Jacobia Thompson 1 dollar.

Jorgen Nelson was chosen as a Trustee for 3 years, in place of O. Stianson, whose term of office had already expired in March. As Precentor was chosen O. Stianson, since M. Hoverson who had officiated previously had returned to Norway.

Religious activity started early in the new town on the Frontier. Several congregations established themselves, and many denominations were represented.



The First Lutheran Church, St. Joseph. Own photo, 2006.

In 1843 the first pioneer minister, the Rev. T. Reeves, Presbyterian, preached in the *Beattie Tavern*, St. Joseph; in 1844, the Rev. Edward Robinson started his work for the

Methodist Church; the first Catholic Church was established in 1847, and the Academy of the Sacred Heart followed in 1856; the Baptists were congregating in 1844; the Disciples of Christ came in 1844; the Protestant Episcopal Church was established by 1851; the Zion Evangelical congregation had its church in 1865, the Congregationalists in 1867, and the Unitarians in 1867. There was, in other words, no lack of religious venues during the years of pioneer settlement. But the Norwegians stayed true to their upbringing and their religious institutions. They came as Lutherans, and remained Lutherans.

The chronological order of the first Lutheran congregations which came to be the predecessors of the First English Lutheran Church is:

- *The Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, St. Joseph*; founded by Peter Laurentius Larsen, pastor from 1860-1861. Norwegian Synod, 1860-1885. Other pastors: G.M. Erdahl, 1870-1875; Neham Christensen, 1875-1879, 1882-1885.
- *The Brush Creek Evangelical Lutheran Congregation*; led by the Rev. David Earhart, 1862.¹³⁵ Last record of congregation: 1886.
- *Christ's Evangelical Lutheran Church, St. Joseph*; led by the Rev. David Earhart, the Pittsburg Synod, 1866-1870.
- *Holt's Scandinavian Lutheran Church, St. Joseph*; meetings held on Ole O. Stinson's farm; led by the Rev. Neham Christensen, 1870-1886.
- *Moray English Lutheran Church*; led by the Rev. Charles Martin of St. Joseph, 1878-1886.
- *The First English Lutheran Church of St. Joseph*; led by the Rev. Edward F. Trefz, 1894.

These six congregations represent, as mentioned, the lineage leading up to the present-day *First Lutheran Church* in St. Joseph. There were, however, other attempts to establish congregations near St. Joseph between 1860 and the turn of the century. Nora C. Nelson refers to the Norwegian Synod records for the following survey, which in some cases overlaps the information mentioned above, and the congregations are sometimes placed under a different name.

- *The St. Joseph Rural Congregation*; Norwegian Synod 1860-1885. 25 members in 1873. Ministers: P. L. Larsen, G. M. Erdahl, Neham Christensen.

¹³⁵ David Earhart was the grandfather of Amelia Earhart, the aviation pioneer.

- *The St. Joseph Town Congregation*; Norwegian Synod 1875-1879. Disbanded in 1879. Minister: Nehem Christensen.
- *The St. Joseph Congregation*; unaffiliated 1898-1904. Disbanded 1904. Minister: Paul Hendrichsen.
- *The Soggendal Congregation*, St. Joseph; unaffiliated until 1875. Norwegian Conference 1886-1890. Disbanded 1890. Minister: Nehem Christensen 1875-1879; J. A. Brynjulfson 1886-1890. 15 members in 1876, 29 in 1885.
- *The Weatherby Congregation*, DeKalb County, MO; United Church 1892-1895. 16 members in 1894. Minister: E. H. Midbo.¹³⁶
- *The Holt Congregation*, Clay County, MO; Norwegian Synod 1883-1895. Disbanded in 1895. 31 members in 1884, 25 in 1885. Minister: Nehem Christensen.

The constitution of the first Lutheran congregation, the cornerstone of subsequent Lutheran congregations in the town, has been preserved in a manuscript. The record was kept by Mrs. H. C. Varner of St. Joseph, and has been translated by Professor Frank G. Nelson.¹³⁷

*Records
of
The Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation
at
St. Joseph, Mo. Established the 6th of April, 1860.
THE CONGREGATION'S CONSTITUTION*

We the undersigned Norwegians living near St. Joseph, Mo., united ourselves herewith as a Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation on the following conditions:

1. *The doctrine of the congregation shall always be that which is contained in God's revealed Word, the canonical books of the Old and New Testament interpreted in agreement with the confession documents of the Norwegian Lutheran Church.*
2. *The performance of Divine Services in the congregation shall be carried out according to the ritual of the Church of Norway and the prescribed Altar Book*

¹³⁶ Peter Laurentius Larsen. "Menigheder i Missouri og Kansas" *Kirkelig Maanedstidende* (June, 1860): 169-172. *Kirkelig Maanedstidende* was the official organ for the Norwegian Synod.

¹³⁷ Copied by courtesy of Morton Nelson, St. Joseph, MO.

thereof of 1688, modified only as conditions here in this country may make necessary.

3. *The congregation will not employ or use as Minister and Cure of Souls anyone but one who has been properly tested, called or ordained in his holy office according to the teaching and ordinance of the Norwegian Lutheran Church.*
4. *The congregation promises to show its called Minister respect and obedience in everything which he orders and does according to God's Word and the ordinances of the Church.*

What strikes the eye in these four short rules of the constitution is the “normality” of the guiding principles. The constitution was written at a time when Peter Laurentius Larsen was their pastor, but there is practically no trace of the orthodoxy associated with the Missouri Synod. On the contrary, what is underscored in the statutes is the intention to preserve and uphold age-old principles established in the Norwegian Lutheran State Church, both doctrine and practise.

It is therefore difficult to trace in this document any sign of the basis for the bitter conflicts which ravaged a number of other Norwegian congregations. One should bear in mind that the Norwegian settlers in St. Joseph had been without their own pastor for 13 years when Laurentius Larsen came to their aid in 1860. During those 13 years, the Norwegians had conducted their own religious meetings in their own homes, and resorted to other denominations for sacraments and priestly service. One may perhaps suggest that they were in their hearts “simple” and down-to-earth people, and not inclined to get entangled in theological dispute, but devout, pious, and sincere Christians.

There are good examples of this kind of faith in some of their letters written in times of crises and tribulations.

I have the heavy duty to inform you that my beloved wife passed away on June 9, after 4 months' illness. ... Whatever we did, it was God's will, and death was her best doctor, wherewith she was well pleased. It is not right for me to complain, but rather be thankful for the almighty ruler who has let us live happily together for 40 years, and with confidence that we shall be gathered in a better world.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Osul Nelson, 1867. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 3.

*I have with sympathy learnt that you have been sorely afflicted by grief and adversity in your family which has been a hard blow for you; but in such cases we must patiently submit to the will of God and his mysterious ways, as his ways are not always ours, and we must say with Job: the Lord giveth, the Lord taketh, praised be the name of the Lord.*¹³⁹

*Concerning myself and my family, I must inform you about our sad situation, because we have lost one of our beloved children, namely Hans. ... At 7 o'clock in the evening he passed away calmly, and joined death for the better. It is a heavy loss to see one's children pass away at a flourishing age like him, but we must reconsider and be thankful for God's providence, and he is blessed who has gone to the valley of Death where there is no sorrow or complaint.*¹⁴⁰

9.10.2 PETER LAURENTIUS LARSEN – THEIR FIRST PASTOR

Peter Laurentius Larsen was born in Christiansand in 1833. He was educated at the University of Christiania, and was ordained in 1857. The same year he brought his wife and child to assume his duties at Rush River in Wisconsin.

The growing demand for Norwegian Lutheran pastors had led to a plan to cooperate with the Missouri Synod who had a theological seminary at Concordia, near St. Louis. It was agreed upon to establish a chair at Concordia for a Norwegian pastor who should direct the training of Norwegian students. The training would be conducted in Norwegian, English, and German. The youngest pastor in the Norwegian Synod, Peter Laurentius Larsen, aged 26, was selected to this position of Professor of Theology in 1859. Later, he became the first President of Luther Academy in 1862; the academy was shortly after relocated to Decorah, and was renamed Luther College.

Karen Larsen, his grand-daughter, writes about the influence of his stay at Concordia Seminary:

*From "Lehre und Wehre" he absorbed the theology of the German Lutheran Missouri Synod and became acquainted with that body, which was later to influence him to a degree which at this time he considered impossible.*¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Anders Nelson, 1871. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 11.

¹⁴⁰ Nels Thompson, 1862. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 16.

¹⁴¹ Karen Larsen. "The Adjustment of a Pioneer Pastor to American Conditions" *The Norwegian-American Historical Association, Studies and Records* IV (1929): 2.

In a situation where essential information from the first period is lacking, or at best scarce, it is of course a blessing that Peter Laurentius Larsen recorded his experiences with the small Norwegian settlements in Buchanan and Doniphan Counties. In an article he states that his stay in St. Louis in 1859 provided him with an opportunity to observe that the Lord's Sacraments were distributed also in settlements far from the main stream of Norwegian immigration. Congregations had been founded in Missouri and Kansas, and had given the settlers a long awaited Norwegian-Lutheran church service. He also recorded that the small Norwegian congregation in St. Louis, about 40 people, had benefited from a fairly tight cooperation with the German Lutherans in the city; in particular a German pastor named Bungers had been a blessing for the Norwegians.

The previous summer, Laurentius Larsen had received a strong request to visit a Norwegian community near St. Joseph, Missouri. During his stay in St. Louis, he wrote to this congregation, and was informed in the reply that there was indeed a Norwegian settlement four miles from St. Joseph, and in addition a second settlement had been founded in Kansas, 12 miles from St. Joseph. At Easter, Larsen set off to visit the two congregations, and preached there on four occasions during Easter week.¹⁴²

*The majority of the people there were from the region east of Kristiansand, and many of them had been there for 13 years; they had travelled, following the well-known Reiersen's instructions to go via New Orleans, had come by boat up to St. Louis, and further on to St. Joseph, without making themselves acquainted with the rest of America. The Kansas settlement was of course much younger, but was mainly made up of people who had moved over from Missouri, there was even talk that most of the settlers in Missouri would by and by cross over into Kansas, as they would receive a fair price for their farms in Missouri, and might afterwards purchase a bigger farm in Kansas, since the price for land there was far cheaper. The Norwegian settlers in Missouri numbered around 10-12, in Kansas 20-25, and it was no surprise that especially the younger generation in such a small Norwegian population had become rather Americanized. They read English better than Norwegian, because they had a lot of American schools, but no Norwegian school. Their need for religious instruction and church community, they had had sought satisfied through attending various American churches, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist, but few of them had actually joined these congregations.*¹⁴³

¹⁴² Laurentius Larsen. "Menigheder i Missouri og Kansas" *Kirkelig Maanedstidende* (June, 1860): 170.

¹⁴³ Ibid. My translation.

Laurentius Larsen found that the settlers in Missouri and Kansas made no clear distinction between the teachings of the various denominations. There were some, however, who subscribed to *Kirkelig Maanedstidende*, and were therefore rather well informed about the development of Norwegian-American churches. He was pleased to see that the settlers were all willing to lend an ear to his attempts to clarify matters of faith. They had for years been like sheep without a shepherd, and under Larsen's guidance set about to establish congregations in Missouri and Kansas. On his part, he promised to visit them three times a year: at Christmas, Easter, and at the end of the summer holiday at Concordia College.

I confirmed on this occasion in Kansas 3 married women, aged 27, 23, and 23, and on my next visit I shall surely see more confirmands, both married and unmarried. I received an order for 22 English translations of Luther's little catechism ...and 9 Norwegian catechisms from Madison. ...The relative number of English and Norwegian books clearly shows the preferences among the youngsters.¹⁴⁴ ...These congregations around St. Joseph ought to have their own pastor, and necessarily someone who was able to preach in English. But the congregations are too small to be able to pay a resident pastor. If their numbers were increased twice, it could be arranged, because there is prosperity among these settlers. I dare not try to persuade people to come here, we should rather try to make people move together and not disperse them further.

The market in St. Joseph seems to be excellent, as long as the migration to Pike's Peak continues. And here I want to add something which is to the credit of the Norwegians: I did not hear of anybody who wanted to go to the gold fields, in spite of the fact that they daily observe the many wagon-trains going in that direction.¹⁴⁵

Laurentius Larsen was surprisingly liberal in the question of language. He seemed to be at ease with the preferences for English texts found among the young Norwegians in

¹⁴⁴ In another article in *Kirkelig Maanedstidende* for February 1860, titled "The Missouri Synod's View on Our School and Language Conditions": 50-51, Laurentius Larsen reports that "the English language in time must become dominant among all the immigrants in this nation, though earlier among the Norwegians than the Germans, obviously because the latter are far more numerous. ...)The right path ... is to show people how it is necessary for them to learn English – and even more important to preserve their pure Evangelical-Lutheran faith. ... We must: 1) preserve our Lutheran faith untainted by all the American sects, 2) not be too rash to copy everything American, before we have tried and found that these customs are better than our own." My translation (also title of article).

¹⁴⁵ Larsen. "Menigheder i Missouri og Kansas": 171-172. My translation.

Missouri and Kansas, and admitted that he thought it “beautiful that the pure word of God is spread in the language which the great mass of this nation speaks”.¹⁴⁶ In his article from February, 1860, he explicitly stated that the attempts to prevent Americanization would be both useless and unnatural; their Lutheran faith, however, must be kept untainted and pure.

9.11 THE ST. JOSEPH SETTLEMENT: SUMMING UP

The rapidly growing town of St. Joseph turned out to be a good choice for the little band of 52 Norwegian settlers who arrived on the *Old Hickory* in 1847. They had tarried for six weeks in New Orleans, but once on their way on the Mississippi and the Missouri, they seemed focused on reaching the north-western corner of the frontier state without wasting time on other possible locations. German, British, Irish, and American settlers had already arrived in considerable numbers, but the Norwegian contingent never surpassed a level of “critical mass” as far as number of settlers is concerned. They must have hoped for a major influx of other Norwegians to follow, but the economic situation in Norway made emigration a less tempting option until the 1880s when waves of mass-emigration reached the shores of New York and Brooklyn. Therefore the apex of Norwegian settlement in Buchanan County was reached in 1855 with 194 Norwegian settlers. Consequently, the period of Norwegian immigration to the St. Joseph area was brief, and the number of Norwegian settlers was further diminished when cheap and fertile land became available in Kansas in the late 1850s. Despite the limited number of immigrants in the “Landvik-group”, their endeavour is all the same remarkable. They relied heavily on one single pathfinder, followed Johan R. Reiersen’s advice in every detail, but eventually struck their own individualistic and daring path, making the establishment of the colony in St. Joseph an exceptional event in the history of Norwegian migration.

The group was almost entirely made up of experienced farmers, who like many other Norwegian emigrants, nurtured a dream of securing a future for their children. They hungered for land, and land was precisely what they found in the mid-west: fertile and abundant areas of easily tillable soil. If the acquisition of large tracts of land be the measure of their success, the pioneers were successful, and they must have been pleased to see their children established on farms initially secured by them. What sacrifices they had made to come this far, and what sorrows and longings they hid in their hearts, is another matter.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.: 172. My translation.

Because they were so few, the pressure from the surrounding society was heavy. They never succeeded in keeping their own school, but were content to send their children to American schools, even Catholic ones. They expressed strong wishes to uphold their Lutheran faith, but it took them 13 years before a Norwegian pastor paid them a visit. Before 1860, they conducted their own religious meetings, and resorted to other denominations for rituals connected to baptism and weddings. They were open to “mixed” marriages, in the sense that many of the second generation found their spouses among other nationalities, especially American and British. They readily gave their children American first names at baptisms, and did not make any serious resistance to the expanding use of English to replace Norwegian. They cannot be counted among the “transplanted villages” found and described in Norwegian and Swedish communities in Minnesota and Wisconsin, or German settlements in Missouri. On the contrary, they were rapidly absorbed by the American cultural forces around them, and became part of a growing American middle class. None of the pioneers took public office in Buchanan County. They rather remained unobtrusive, yet loyal and diligent partners in the building of their local community and the United States.

Told separately, many stories collected by the Nelson family seem of little historical significance, but as a whole they make up a fabric which is revealing in relation to the newcomers’ social standing and position.

One family arrived in the 1850s with a large yellow cat, a tomcat named *Gulbrand*, which the children refused to leave behind in Norway. A settler read aloud from *Holberg’s Comedies* on winter evenings to his family and farm-hands. Children who had stubbornly refused to learn to read Norwegian changed their minds when a book on the famous master-thief *Gjest Baardsen* reached the settlement; it made the rounds of several families until it was literally read to pieces. The longest living of the pioneers, who was nearly ninety when Nora C. Nelson talked to her, insisted that none of the immigrants had worn any sort of “national costume” at home or on the voyage, and would not have thought of doing so. Peder Nelson (Kalvehaven) had studied English on board the *Izette* from a book of self-instruction, and in St. Joseph he sent his daughters to the Catholic nuns’ school the first winter to insure they learn English properly. His American neighbours found it strange that he allowed only those trees cut down which he personally had selected on his farm. His wife, Karen, had worked in the vicarage in Landvik Parish before her marriage, and was a fanatic about cleanliness in her kitchen; during their stay in New Orleans in 1847 she had boiled the drinking water, and in

Missouri she refused black help in the kitchen because she distrusted the slaves' hygienic standards. Several families cherished heavy silver spoons brought from the old country.

Taken together these stories picture an immigrant group far different from the romantic stereotype of simple, unlettered people, driven from Norway by poverty and bringing with them the almost medieval ways of isolated mountain valleys, innocents dumped in a strange new world with only their bare hands to help them. The St. Joseph settlers were in some ways more like what 19th century Norway would call *de Conditionerte*, an invidious term equivalent to the English "better sort of people"; in other words, people with some money and a certain sophistication, whose life style and attitudes in some respects were more European than traditionally Norwegian. The settlers in Missouri were of course not a totally homogenous group. Some of them were people of little means, but their leaders and the most prominent men fit this observation.

The immigrant generation learned English rather quickly, and in their later years used it almost as much as Norwegian even among themselves. Their children preferred English, and the third generation ordinarily knew only a few words and odd phrases of Norwegian. With them knowledge of Norwegian died out. Almost complete cultural assimilation occurred even earlier.¹⁴⁷

In 1896 the surviving immigrants and their relatives and descendants celebrated the 50th anniversary of the departure from Norway in 1846. A grand reception was held in Troy, Kansas, and was repeated ten years later. At this first gathering only eleven people of the original group were present. Most of them had been small children when they sailed from Grimstad. On both occasions speakers cherished their Norwegian heritage, and spoke in English as a matter of course.

The later history of the St. Joseph settlement is one common to most pioneer farm families in the USA, 19th century immigrants and pre-Revolutionary Americans alike. Increased urbanization occurred with each generation after the Civil War until most of the pioneers' descendants were scattered from coast to coast. Before this diaspora the descendants of the Norwegians who arrived in 1847 were absorbed completely into the larger community and had become an integral part of it. Nevertheless, a tenacious sense of group identity persisted, primarily because strong family ties in extended kinship networks were part of the normal pattern of society in the region.

¹⁴⁷ In an interview with the oldest "Norwegians" in Troy, Kansas, in the summer of 2006, Leroy Jamvold, Anna Olson and Sylvia Johnson Rush told me that they never spoke Norwegian at home or at school, in fact they avoided Norwegian, since speaking the language surely would lead to teasing from other children. Their parents came to Kansas at the beginning of the 20th century.

Still, by World War II such family traditions and the kinship networks which kept the contacts alive in modern society, had weakened greatly, the inevitable result of geographic and social mobility. The shock of the German invasion in Norway awakened a new awareness of their origins among Americans of Norwegian ancestry everywhere.¹⁴⁸ Then came the ethnic revival of almost every ethnic group in America. The descendants of the “Landvik-group” and those who joined them in the late 1840s and the 1850s were numerous enough to enable the Nelsons in St. Joseph to collect family traditions and store them safely for later use.

¹⁴⁸ Frank G. Nelson was imprisoned in 1940 by the German troops in Oslo while working with the American embassy. The incident evidently roused his sense of his family roots, and must have prompted his collaboration with family historian Nora C. Nelson in preserving the written material and traditions passed on from the original settlers in St. Joseph.

The four pictures on the following pages show gravestones in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph, MO. Own photos, 2006.



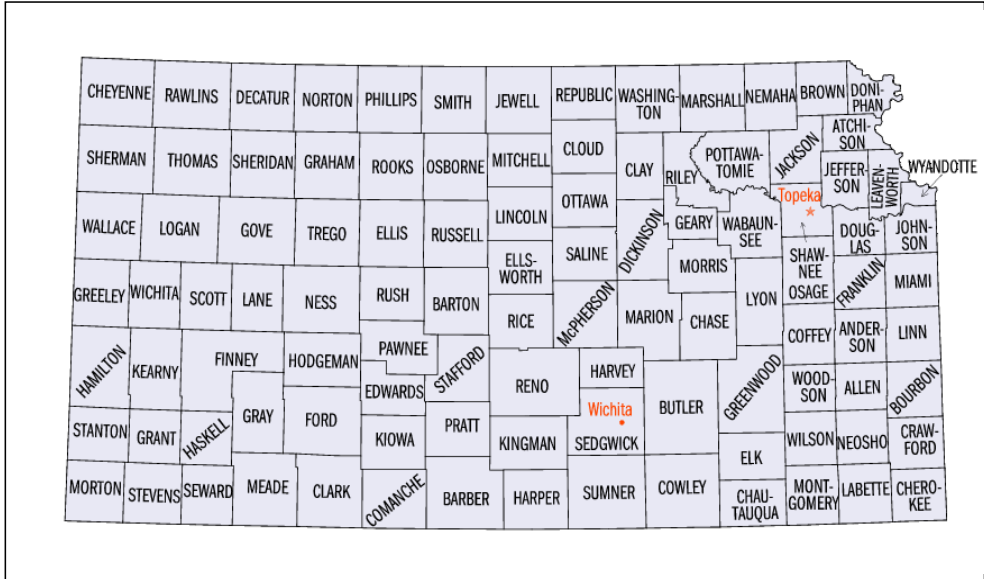


CHAPTER X:

**THE SETTLEMENT IN
EAST NORWAY, KANSAS**



East Norway (now known as Moray), near Troy, Kansas. Own photo, 2006.



The Kansas Counties http://quickfacts.census.gov/qdf/maps/kansas_map.html (Accessed July 31, 2007)

10.1 ACROSS THE RIVER

During his stay with the Norwegians in Missouri in 1860, Laurentius Larsen noticed that some of the settlers in St. Joseph had moved into Kansas, and that many of the pioneers were contemplating following them into Doniphan County. The territory had been opened for settlement in 1854, and in 1857 the first Norwegian farmers from the St. Joseph colony crossed the Missouri and took out their claims about 20 miles west of the river, near Troy in Wolf River Township. The first settlement was founded in Brush Creek in Wayne Township, but in a short time the main focus fell on the location which today is known as Moray. In 1869 they named their central settlement *East Norway*, and the colony retained that name until 1894 when it was renamed Moray.

Previous to 1854, the land in Doniphan County had been held by three Indian tribes, the Kickapoos, the Iowas, and the Sacs and Foxes who had three villages on the Wolf River. It was only when these tribes signed an agreement with the government in Washington that the organized settlement of Kansas began. The chiefs of the tribes were induced to travel to Washington to sign the treaty, but did so reluctantly and finally accepted a very much decreased reservation. At least one chief, Ne-sour-quoit, refused to abide by the terms of the treaty, and his tribe was removed to a reservation in Nebraska. There are no reports about any sort of clashes between the Norwegian settlers and the Indians, but the very act of pushing

them out of their hunting grounds, contained the seeds for the hostilities between the Indians and the army in the 1880s and 1890s in Western Kansas.¹

In 1862, Nels Guttormsen Thompson wrote home from Doniphan County, confirming precisely the process of selling at a profit and investing in an extended acreage in Kansas:

*If you did receive my last letter, you have learned that I sold my property in Missouri, and bought a new one in Kansas, where I now live. I sold my farm in Missouri for 1,100 dollars, and about 200 dollars for the crops. After that, I might have gone back to Norway, if I had been convinced that it would have been to my advantage, but I preferred to go to Kansas where I had better prospects, both for myself and my family.*²

In Laurentius Larsen's report from his meeting with the small Norwegian communities in Missouri and Kansas in 1860, he clearly expressed the view that the farmers were attracted by abundant, cheap, and fertile land on the prairie, and could also count on selling their homesteads near St. Joseph for a good price.³ Although farming conditions near St. Joseph were in general excellent, the available acreage of good soil had become limited, and the prospect of being able to purchase a bigger farm in Kansas was of course a tempting financial option. There is little doubt that such economic considerations were of major importance and actually decisive in the process moving further west, but one might suggest that two factors of a somewhat more personal kind possibly added weight to the decision to depart from St. Joseph.

There is every reason to believe that the majority of the Norwegian settlers in Missouri were opposed to slavery. Like most of the German settlers in the state, they were strongly disapproving by the use of slaves in the hemp, tobacco, and cotton fields, but some few settlers took a different stand, and would argue that they simply did what was reasonable and fair as integrated farmers in the American economic system. In Kamphoefner's material there is a tendency to link the use of slaves to better-off immigrants.⁴ Peder Nelson was one such farmer; he kept six or eight slaves, by all accounts treating them as well as could be expected, but he thus set himself apart from the other Norwegian settlers, and may have felt an increasing sense of isolation as many of his compatriots moved across the *Old Muddy*. This is of course a conjecture, but there is evidence in the letters that relations between Peder Nelson

¹ *Illustrated Doniphan County, 1916*: 14.

² Nels (Guttormsen) Thompson, 1862. *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 16*.

³ Laurentius Larsen. "Menigheder i Missouri og Kansas": 170.

⁴ Kamphoefner, op. cit.: 115-116.

and Osul Nelson soured, and the patriarch in St. Joseph was quite bitter in his reaction to his cousin's triumphant visit to Norway in 1871:

*Osul was here when he left for Norway, and I asked him to greet you and S. Davidsen and my old neighbours in Homborsund, which he has not done, as Jørgen has spoken with him. I have not seen him since he came back, though he many times travelled past the house as if he was shameful, so I have received no news from him about Norway, but they have in welcome-songs and toasts lifted him so high that he could see how high the mountains are ... and then one cannot expect him to care for common people.*⁵

It should be emphasized that the main drive to establish a daughter colony in Doniphan County was founded on the possibility of acquiring more land and selling the original farm in St. Joseph at a profit. The reaction to Peder Nelson's southern sympathies, and the worsening relations between him and his cousin, were only secondary when compared to the hunger for more land. It is true that the two veterans established themselves as undisputed, though unofficial leaders of the mother and the daughter colony, but their private disputes hardly affected the continuous communication between people on either side of the Missouri. They kept in touch, enjoyed the possibility to take part in social gatherings and family festivities in both locations, and felt obliged to support each other in times of sorrow.

*When we get tired of staying on this side of the river, we cross over into Kansas and visit Niels and Ingeborg whom the children like very much to meet. Niels and Ingeborg came over to the funeral last fall, and this spring Niels also attended Hans' funeral. Both these processions looked very well attended.*⁶

The settlement in St. Joseph was by all standards compact, with Norwegian farms all clustered to the southeast of the town, and certainly within easy walking distance of each other. When many of the pioneers and their families started to establish themselves further to the west in Doniphan County, the lines of communication were stretched, resulting in what the sociologist Peter A. Munch has termed an *extensive* type of growth of the settlement.⁷

This type of growth involves an expansion into neighbouring areas, and is, according to Munch, often combined with the admittance of foreign settlers into the core of the

⁵ Peder Nelson, 1871-72. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 8.

⁶ Håver Stensvand, 1866. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 14.

⁷ Peter A. Munch. "Segregation and Assimilation of Norwegian Settlements in Wisconsin" *Norwegian-American Studies and Records* 18 (1954): 110-111.

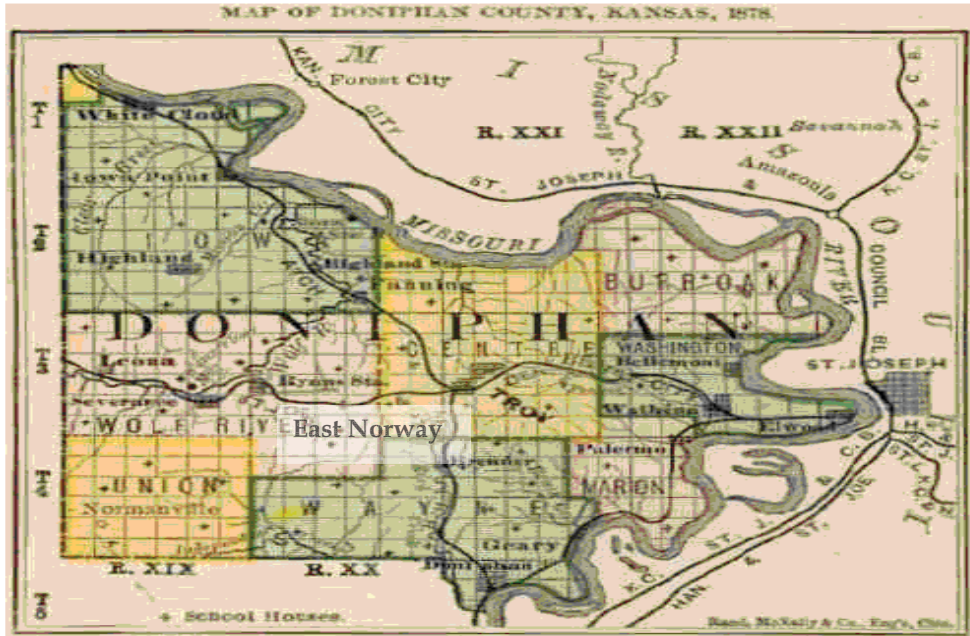
settlement. An *extensive* growth therefore implies a certain openness in relation to the social environment, and “tends to lengthen the line of contact and thereby increases the number and intensity of the contacts actually made with the environment. This type of growth may eventually lead to a disintegration of the settlement and its fusion into a larger social unit.”⁸

On the other hand, Munch’s idea of an *intensive* type of growth seems to indicate a stronger consolidation of the settlement: a keeping of original characteristics, and a negative approach towards foreign elements. Therefore, such a growth will tend to reduce contact with the outside social environment, and in many ways represents a protective kind of adjustment, often found in the so-called *transplanted villages* where a considerable number of immigrants of the same origin were inclined to and able to defend their distinctive character.

In the case of the two Norwegian settlements in Buchanan and Doniphan Counties, their numerical strength was obviously of critical importance. As mentioned before, the influx of new immigrants more or less came to an end in the late 1850s, and any hope of an expansive haven for large numbers of Norwegian settlers never came about. In fact, even before the secondary move into Kansas, the colony in St. Joseph was so small that the process of assimilation and “Americanization” was well on its way. The moment the Norwegian population was further dispersed, their ability to uphold their Norwegian characteristics should have been weakened, and one would expect that the ensuing study of the settlement in East Norway shows a parallel development to that of the mother colony in Missouri.

⁸ Ibid.: 111.

10.2 DONIPHAN COUNTY



Doniphan County. Map from 1882 Historical Plat Book

<http://www.freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~pyle/DoniphanPlat1882.html> (Accessed July 31, 2007)

Doniphan County was one of the original counties of the Territory. Its borders were first defined in 1855, substantially as they now exist, bounded by the Missouri River and the counties of Atchison and Brown. By proclamation, Governor Reeder in 1854 divided the region into 16 election districts; what is now Doniphan County was designated as the 14th Council District, with three voting precincts: Doniphan, Wolf Creek, and Burr Oak. The county seat was established in Troy, after the county had been named in honour of Colonel Doniphan, the celebrated commander of a regiment of cavalry in the Spanish-American War, and who later became a zealous partisan in the campaign to extend slavery into Kansas.⁹

In 1883, William G. Cutler stated that the county consisted of 25% of bottom land and 75% of upland. Forest covered 16% of the area, mostly walnut, hickory, oak, and cottonwood, and rolling prairie and bluffs the remaining 84%. The land was watered by the Wolf River and other creeks, all of them emptying into the Missouri River. In the early 1880s, 242,560 acres of the land were under cultivation. The population was largely rural, about 70% living

⁹ Noble Lovely Prentis. *History of Kansas* (Winfield, KS: E.P. Greer, 1899).

outside the towns.¹⁰ The total population in the county was 8,083 in 1860, ten years later it had increased to 13,969, but slumped to 13,943 in 1875.¹¹

When the first immigrants of the “Landvik-group” crossed the Missouri in 1856, they travelled past Troy, and made their claims primarily in Wolf River Township. Osul Nelson seems to have been the first from the group who scouted the territory and took his claim there in 1856, renting his farm in St. Joseph to others, and settling permanently in Kansas in 1857. There were also stray examples of Norwegian farmers settling in neighbouring Wayne and Centre Townships, and even in Brown County to the west of Doniphan County. The settlers were predominantly farmers, although some few of them had secondary occupations such as blacksmiths and shopkeepers.

The Norwegian contingent settled alongside German and Danish immigrants, but numerically never constituted a dominant or even major group in the county. They remained, however, strong in the little settlement which for all practical purpose became their central basis, the location they named *East Norway*.

The Norwegian population reached its peak in 1860, but in the following decades saw little influx from the homeland. There was certainly some splintering of the mother settlement in St. Joseph; in fact the core settlers in Doniphan County came from that colony, but both settlements suffered from the lack of fresh Norwegian settlers after 1860.

*Table 10.1: Norwegian population in Doniphan County, KS (settlers born in Norway, or children with at least one parent born in Norway):*¹²

	Total population, Doniphan County	Norwegian settlers, Doniphan County	% of Norwegians
1860	8,083	103	1.3%
1870	13,969	142	1.0%

The Kansas State Board of Agriculture issued their first biennial report on agriculture in Doniphan County in 1878, showing the following main characteristics:¹³

¹⁰ William G. Cutler. *History of the State of Kansas* (Chicago, IL.: A.T. Andreas, 1883): part I.

¹¹ *Census Returns, 1860, 1870, 1875, Doniphan County, KS*. Printed version, Troy Public Library, Troy, KS.

¹² *Census Returns, Doniphan County, KS, 1860, 1870*. Printed version, Troy Public Library, Troy, KS.

¹³ Kansas State Board of Agriculture. *First Biennial Report, Doniphan County 1878*.

<http://skyways.lib.ks.us/genweb/archives/1878/doniphan.shtml> (Accessed September 24, 2007).

Table 10.2: Acreage of field crops, Doniphan County, KS, 1872-1878:

Crops	1872	1874	1876	1878
Winter wheat	13,139	21,443	14,195	27,467
Corn	50,511	45,629	50,207	55,415
Oats	10,181	4,081	8,428	8,039
Cotton	0	0	0	0
Hemp	328	2,400	138	28
Tobacco	2	1.5	30	1
Potatoes (Irish)	753	704	1,022	1,008

As far as acreage is concerned, the dominant crops in the period were winter wheat, corn, and oats, whereas traditional southern crops such as cotton and tobacco were either unknown or of slight importance. The favourite crop among the pioneers in St. Joseph, hemp, reached its peak of popularity in 1874, but afterwards fell into insignificance. On the whole, the Norwegian settlers followed these trends, but sometimes added a fruit orchard to their acreage. In 1871, the farmers in Wolf River Township (with a fair share of Norwegians among them), harvested the following main crops: wheat (3,565 acres/ 88,466 bushels), barley (1,465 acres/ 25,334 bushels), corn (10,872 acres/ 378,640 bushels), oats (1,482 acres/ 44,064 bushels).¹⁴

Apart from these staple crops, an attempt at growing cotton was made on Wolf River in 1861, reportedly of good quality, “almost as good as that raised in the South.”¹⁵ 20 years later, about a dozen farmers in the eastern and southern areas of the township, made an attempt to use African-American slaves to do their farm work. The experiment failed; the slaves were “discharged” and replaced by white workers.

*These negroes were a jolly set, all Southern born, jet black and genuine sons of the cotton field. After a day's labor, they would congregate at night at some neighbor's house to sing their Southern melodies, in which happy occupation they would often continue until a late hour. Stealing watermelons was their favourite pastime.*¹⁶

¹⁴ P.L. Gray. *Gray's Doniphan County History: A Record of the Happenings of Half a Hundred Years* (Bendena, KS: the Roycroft Press, 1905): 44.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*: 42.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*: 45.

Table 10.3: *Agricultural and livestock production, the State of Kansas and Doniphan County, KS, 1860. Source: U. S. Census Bureau, Population of States and Counties of the United States, 1790-1990; Census Returns, Census of Agriculture, Kansas, 1860. www.census.gov/population/www/censusdata/hiscendata/html (Accessed October 13, 2007) www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/Historical_Publications/1860/1860b-05.pdf (Accessed October 14, 2007)*

	Improved/ Unimpr. land (acres)	Cash value of farms (\$)	Value of implements (\$)	Horses (nr.)	Milch cows (nr.)	Working oxen (nr.)	Sheep (nr.)	Swine (nr.)	Butter (lbs.)	Hemp, dew- rotted (tons)	Wheat (bush.)	Corn (bush.)	Oats (bush.)	Potatoes, Irish (bush.)
State of Kansas	405,468 1,372,932	12,258,239	727,694	20,344	28,550	21,551	17,569	138,224	1,093,497	44	194,173	6,150,727	88,325	296,335
Doniphan County	20,671 59,870	891,878	35,123	1,182	1,480	960	1,774	13,381	83,986	40	26,366	457,268	12,909	26,970
Doniphan County, ranking – compared to other counties in the state	10 9	3	7	5	7	9	2	1	3	1	1	4	2	3
Kansas, production per capita	3.9 impr. acres per capita	\$118.90 per capita	\$1.79 per impr. acre	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	1.3	10.6	0.4 kg	1.9	59.6	0.86	2.9
Doniphan County, production per capita	2.6 impr. acres per capita	\$110.30 per capita	\$1.70 per impr. acre	0.15	0.2	0.1	0.2	1.7	10.4	4.9 kg	3.3	56.6	1.6	3.3

Note: The population in the State of Kansas in 1860 was 103,116; Doniphan County had in the same year 8,083 inhabitants, the third most populous county in the state. By 1890, there were 1,427,154 inhabitants in Kansas, while Doniphan County had 13,535 – one of the least populated counties in the state.

A more detailed survey (*Table 10.3*), the agricultural production and the development of livestock farming in Doniphan County in 1860, shows some interesting tendencies compared to the state of Kansas as a whole. Doniphan County was undoubtedly the preferred location for settlers connected to the “Landvik-group”, but it would be wrong to assume that their small number had any major influence upon the development of agriculture. On the other hand, they may have been models in some respects, and brought with them some significant agricultural practises from Missouri. One might therefore suggest that Doniphan County – and the Norwegian settlements there – were characterized in this early period (the 1860s) by some rather noteworthy tendencies:

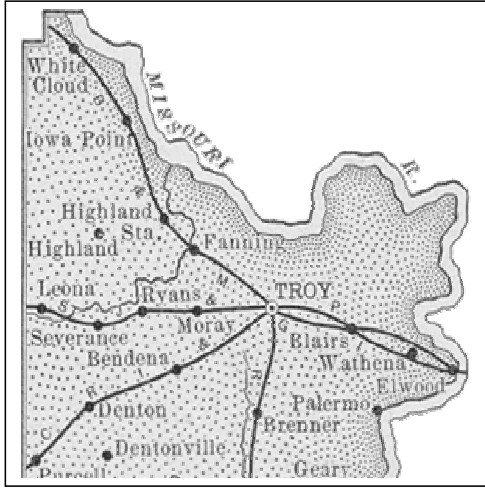
- The farms in the county in the early period of settlement tended to be a little smaller than in the rest of the state.
- These farms also were of slightly less value.
- The farmers owned fewer implements, and one might suggest that they were somewhat slower in putting new machinery to use.
- They ranked at or near the top as regards the number of sheep and swine kept on the farms.¹⁷ In his letter from 1871, Osul Nelson stated that they had herded in 90 hogs for slaughter, and there were still at least 50 left on the outside of the pen.¹⁸
- They were major contributors in the cultivation of hemp, wheat, oats, and potatoes. In the case of hemp production, the Norwegian settlers had experienced some success as this turned out to be their main cash crop in Missouri. They obviously brought the taste for this successful produce with them to Kansas, and were virtually the sole growers of the crop in the state. In a rather short time, however, hemp would be replaced by other products.

¹⁷ “Almost every farm had some land adapted to sheep grazing, while wool production seemed an ideal use for land too distant to permit other uses. A large market obviously existed since the nation normally imported a large proportion of its needs of raw wool or fabricated cloth. ... The demand for lamb or mutton remained limited in view of the abundant supplies of beef and pork.” Clarence H. Danhof. *Change in Agriculture*: 165-166.

“[The frontier settlement farming] was characterized by hogs known as the razorback. [The animal was able] to fend for itself in securing food and to defend itself from predators. ... As settlement became more dense, the food sources of such hogs diminished. Moreover, they were a serious menace to cultivated fields. ... In the West, the shift from the common razorback to improved varieties began about 1840, and progressed rapidly. Although the razorbacks were a source of almost costless pork, the animal lost commercial value as hog-packing became a well-organized industry. Since the half-wild animals could not easily be driven, farm slaughtering was necessary. ... Farmers found it difficult to supply the standardized cuts and brines demanded by the market.” Ibid: 177-178.

¹⁸ Osul Nelson, 1871. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 5.

10.2.1 COMMUNICATIONS



The railroad connections came to play an important part early in the development of the agricultural economy in Doniphan County. For the Norwegian settlers in Wolf River Township, the St. Joseph & Denver City Railroad, crossing the Missouri at Elwood, gave them the opportunity to solve their problems of finding means of transport to the markets for their agricultural produce. When East Norway/Moray was included among the stations on the line, the

Norwegians and their neighbours were quick in building a grain elevator and opening a store and a post office. The map shows the line running east-west, with the stations Moray, Ryan's Station, Severance, and Leona to the west of Troy.¹⁹

10.2.2 WOLF RIVER TOWNSHIP

Wolf River, one of the original townships in the county, was organized in 1855. The year before, the first recorded settlers came from Ohio and took up claims along the river. In 1856, Osul Nelson was mentioned together with John Wood, George Bromley, Laban Jackson, and George Malon; these farmers settled in the northeast of the township, while Charles Phillips, Thomas Lyons, Abram Bennett, and Pat Kirwan located in the eastern parts. In the following year, Silas Lloyd, David Hoppins, and John Starr chose their land in the southern sections of the township. In the history of Wolf River Township, these pioneers and their families are regarded as founding farmers.²⁰

In P.L.Gray's view, Wolf River was one of the most resourceful townships in Doniphan County, blessed with an abundance of "the excellent lands of the foremost county in the state." Between Troy and Purcell, along the Rock Island Railroad, one would find 30,000 acres of land, "as fair and fine and rich as any that the sun, in his daily journey around the world, finds to shed its glory on."²¹

¹⁹ Prentis, op. cit.

²⁰ P.L. Gray. *Gray's Doniphan County History*: 41.

²¹ *Ibid.*: 40.

If one is to believe the same author, the township was, in fact, one large and beautiful farm, “lavishly soiled, and plentifully watered by copious springs and clear-running streams.” At the turn of the century, there were scores of farms in the area, with an estimated price of \$100 an acre, a pretty fair price for ground 25 miles from the city, says P.L. Gray.²²

10.3 *EAST NORWAY*

In January, 1869, a stock company composed of six of the local farmers, Osul Nelson, G. Nelson, Thomas Steanson, Nels Gustav Nelson, Abram Bennett, and Tyra Nelson, selected a site for a station on the St. Joseph & Denver City railroad, to be called *East Norway*. John Hoverson sold them the necessary land for \$360, and the town plat was recorded. In 1870, ten acres of land was bought from G. Nelson, and donated to the railway company by the same group of farmers. A depot and a side track were built in the same year.²³ The Norwegian settlers were in other words strongly represented in the move to establish the station named *East Norway*, thereby promoting the economic development and the construction of a necessary transportation network in the region. Osul Nelson was undoubtedly a central character in the group of interested parties, joined by his wife and two sons. Thomas Steanson represented the immigrants who arrived on the *Hermes* in 1850. His father was Ole Stiansen Gåskjenn (from Holt Parish) and Thomas had arrived in Kansas in 1858.²⁴ Only Abram Bennett and his family initially came from outside the Norwegian group, and would remain a close friend and business companion for the Norwegian settlers.

Before the establishment of the station, depot, store, and eventually a grain elevator in *East Norway*, Norwegians had begun settling in the surrounding area; they first came from the mother colony in St. Joseph, but a trickle of new immigrants arrived in the late 1850s, often via the original settlement in Missouri. The *Igland*-family remained central also in this movement, although the centre of exodus had shifted eastward in Norway into Holt Parish and the Tvedestrand area, and the very close family ties were becoming thinner and more fragile. One should in particular mention the Eriksen, Stiansen, and Terkelsen families in this connection. In addition, emigrants from other parts of Southern Norway were of course also part of the migration into Doniphan County, but they remained few in number.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*: 51.

²⁴ See *Index, 1850*.

The following list of settlers might be said to represent the link to the original group of emigrants; they definitely became core persons in the move to establish a daughter colony in Kansas where both veterans from St. Joseph and newcomers from Norway would feel welcome among old acquaintances, relatives, and friends, and enjoy the widening circles of the *Igland* connections.²⁵

Osul Nelson (Nielsen Enge), arrived in Missouri in 1847, settled in Kansas in 1856-57; married to Gunnhild Terjesdatter Håland (died 1867). Osul was married for the second time to Anne Pedersdatter (3 children).

Children: Aase, married to Hans Arnesen; Gurine, married to Lars Nielsen (Lewis Nelson); Maren, married to Charles Hardy; Trine, married to Samuel Hardy; Terje (Tyra), married to Mariette Donillson, settled in Nebraska; Nels Gustav, married to Margaret Andrews, settled in Nebraska; Augusta (Gusta), married to Ebert Simon.

From second marriage: Osul Thompson, married to Jacobine Nelson; Peter Thompson, married to Mary Nelson; Ingeborg.

Lars Nielsen Haabesland (Lewis Nelson), arrived in Missouri in 1847, settled in Kansas in 1856-57; married to Gurine Nelson.

Children: Amelia Gusta, married to Guttorm Steanson; Nicolas (came to Doniphan County in 1857), married to Toline Running; Julia, married to Edward Erikson; Oscar, married to Almira Noble; Mary Jane, married to William Zimmerman; Louisa Theresa, married to Georg Burkhalter; Margaret Gurina, married to Bernt Running.

Osuld Andersen Løvaasen (Anderson), arrived in Missouri in 1847, came to Kansas in 1858; married to Maren Igland.

Children: Anders, unmarried, came to Kansas in 1860; Nels, unmarried, came to Kansas in 1860; Gunder, unmarried, came to Kansas in 1860; Gunborg, married to Ole Mathias Dannevig; Osul, married to Charity Spencer; Peder, settled in Idaho.

Astri Lunden Håversen (Hoverson), arrived in Missouri in 1847; widow after Knut Håversen Østerhus, came to Kansas ca. 1858.

²⁵ The names in the list are taken from the *Index*, but are confirmed by *Letters from the Pioneers*, and the *Census Returns for Doniphan County* in 1860 and 1870; printed version, Troy Public Library, Troy, KS.

Children: Helmer (Hjalmar); Ivar (Edward), married to Mary Mackney; Ole Nicolai; Anne Kristine, married to Frank Fitzpatrick.

Anders Nielsen Holte (Nelson), arrived in Missouri in 1847, a widower after Gjertrud Omundsdatter, stayed in Kansas for some few years, then returned to St. Joseph.

Children: Grete Marie, married to Arthur Spencer; Nels Olaus, married to Almeria Posegate, settled in St. Louis.

Simon Simonsen Kulaasen, arrived in Missouri in 1847, settled in Kansas about 1859.

Ole Clemmetsen Solberg (Clemmenson), arrived in New York in 1849, settled in Kansas about 1860; married to Åsle Larsdatter.

Children: Tønnes, married to Eliza Gunderson; Tomine, married to Gunder Thronson; Clemmet, married to Maria Lyons; Lars (Lewis), married to Debilla Wilmette; Mathias, married to Tobina Larsen; Inger Gurine; Søren; James; Mary, married to Chris Barenthson; Anne Marie, married to Johannes Hoverson; Ingeborg, married to Ole Mathias Dannevig; Nels; Thomas; Nellie, married to Simon Anderson; Joanna, married to John Hargis.

Ole Mathias Dannevig (Dennick), arrived in Missouri in 1850, settled in Kansas about 1860; widower after Sara Kalvehaven. Married second time to Ingeborg Clemmetsen.

Children: Mathias Henrik.

Ole Nielsen Iglan Lia (Nelson), arrived in New York in 1850, moved to Kansas ca. 1860, but back to Missouri after some few years; married to Anne Hansdatter.

Children: Kirsten, settled in Nebraska, married to W. Rose; Åse, settled in Nebraska, married to Lee Pollard; Peder; Niels.

Ole Nielsen Rørmoen (Nelson), arrived in New York in 1850, moved to Kansas from Missouri ca. 1862; married to Anne Olsdatter.

Children: Åsille, married to Johannes Hoverson; Niels; Maren, married to Edward Pelton; Olava; Ole Edward; Gusta.

Gunder Guttormsen Steine, arrived in New York in 1850, settled for a short period in Kansas about 1862, then returned to Missouri; married to Jacobia Reichelt. One daughter, Maren, died in Kansas.

Peder Guttormsen Gjennestad, arrived in New York in 1850, moved to Kansas from Missouri; married to Karen Bentsdatter.

Children: Guttorm, married to Berte Evans; Bent; Karen; Birthe Marie, married to Isaac Spencer; Gunnhild, married to Joseph Spencer.

Berte Gundersdatter Gjennestad, arrived in New York in 1850, moved to Kansas from Missouri ca. 1862.

Niels Guttormsen Iglad Thompson, arrived in New York in 1850, went to Kansas from Missouri ca. 1861; married to Ingeborg Hansdatter.

Children: Åse, married to George (Jørgen) Nelson; Thomas; Hans; Elisabeth; Adeline Marie; Hannah. Most members of the family were buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph.

Ole Stiansen Gåskjenn (Steanson), arrived in New York in 1850, moved to Kansas from Missouri about 1858; married to Ingeborg Olsdatter.

Children: Stian; Ole, married to Olava (Laura) Nelson; Anne Marie, married to Ole Erikson; Thomas (Guttorm), married to Amalie Gurine Nelson.

Ole Eriksen (Erickson), arrived in New York in 1850, moved to Kansas from Missouri ca. 1860; married to Anne Marie Stiansen.

Children: Marthea Elene, married to – Fischer; Edward (came to Doniphan County in 1878), married to Julia Nelson; Julia Ann; Ole Severin, married to Gusta Thompson; Caroline Rebecca, married to Chester Tellefson; Andrew Osborne.

Nils Larsen (Larson), arrived in Missouri in 1849, moved to Kansas about 1858; married to Anne Oline Knudsdatter (died 1865); married for the second time to Martha - ?

Children: Louisa; Martin; Martine; Mary; Sophia.

Kris. Terkelsen (Chris. Turkleson), arrived in Kansas around 1865; married to Rachel Terkelsen.

Children: Leah.

Johannes Hoverson (John), arrived in Missouri in 1847, moved to Kansas in 1869; married to Celia A. Nelson. Married for the second time to Annie M. Clemmenson.

Children: Leander (died in an accident in 1882); Augusta; Oscar; Mary; Annie; John; Andrew.

The registration and interpretation of the names listed as “Norwegian” in the Census Returns, exhibit the usual problems of inaccurate recording by the census officers and the use of a highly phonetic rendering of foreign names. It is therefore difficult to establish the precise number of Norwegians living in Kansas at the time of the 1860 or 1870 Census. The counting based on the *Index*, sets the estimated number at 125 persons in Doniphan County belonging to the *Igland*-network, but some of these persons moved back and forth across the Missouri, and there were definitely others who were not recorded at all. What seems certain is that the small Norwegian population in Doniphan County in the mid 1860s was dominated by people from the “Landvik-group” and the *Igland*-network, and to an even greater extent, the Norwegian farmers exerted their influence in the more restricted and concentrated area of Wolf River Township. In this way, their *extensive* growth and stretched lines of communication from Missouri into Kansas was to a certain extent counter-balanced by their ability to keep together in fairly concentrated settlements, and avoid a further major splintering into new satellite communities.

10.4 A NEW HOME – NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The move from Buchanan County to Doniphan County was in most respects directed and motivated by prospects of cheaper and richer soil. In their letters, the pioneers tell that they took care to investigate the available land to the west of the Missouri, and their passage was therefore thoroughly considered and well planned. Records from 1863 clearly show that the farmers from the “Landvik-group” were successful in finding new sites of desired quality and size. The following list which mirrors the situation ca.1860 is evidently incomplete, but it highlights the wide expanses of farmland bought by the settlers in the Wolf River vicinity, west and northwest of Troy.

Table 10.4: "Norwegian" farms, Doniphan County; Tax Assessors Records (1863), as part of Probate Index, Doniphan County, KS (1882); Troy Public Library, Troy, KS:

Farmer	Section/township/range	Acreage
Osul Nelson	15-03-20 (03 = Wolf River)	233
Osul Nelson	28-03-20	160
Lewis Nelson	19-03-19	160
Lewis Nelson	28-03-20	160
Hans Nelson	16-03-19	160
Tyra Nelson	21-03-20	160
Nels Anderson	35-04-19 (04 = Wayne)	160
L. Nelson	18-03-19	160

One must assume that the dream to purchase enough land to secure the future of their children, remained unchanged for the pioneers. Compared to the small patches of tillable soil in their home country, the vast prairies in Kansas must have seemed an answer to their prayers. The list printed above casts some light on just that situation: Osul Nelson was in a position to let his son benefit from his own purchase of land, and by 1863 both farmers were well established on individual family farms.

Although their main concern was running their newly acquired farms, there are also signs in the 1860s and 1870s that their scope was broadened and new activities supplemented the basic income. The following fragments tell of a small society which was becoming part of the American economy, and saw better times open the door to enticing social activities.²⁶

The first store in *East Norway* was opened in the railway depot in 1870. In the beginning the store was a primitive and coarse affair, with staple goods like sugar, coffee, tea, nails, and raisins. The store was run by Silas Bennett, and in 1871 he erected a grain house in cooperation with his father, Abram, and moved the store into better quarters. A post office was established in the same building, with another Bennett son as postmaster. In 1873, Tyra Nelson, Osul Nelson's son, bought the whole stock of goods, but he did not remain long in business. A certain Frank Welton of Blue Rapids came looking for a location, and Tyra Nelson sold the property to him. Tyra Nelson was also active in another sphere; for some period of time around 1874 he was one of three blacksmiths in the settlement.

²⁶ The snippets are taken from *Gray's Doniphan County History*: 51-54.

In one of his letters, Osul Nelson gives his version of the establishment of trade in *East Norway*:

*Bennett also runs a small business where he for several weeks has sent off 7 railroad car loads with corn (a car load is 10 tons or 20,000 pounds). In addition he trades in wooden materials for housebuilding, and sells a good deal to many houses under construction. He has also a little general store where he sells coffee, sugar, tobacco, and many small items which the farmers need for their household, so you see that our little Norway is in progress.*²⁷

In 1877, the Hardy brothers, married to Osul Nelson's daughters, built a stone building and became engaged in commerce. The building was destroyed by fire some time later, but the brothers rebuilt the store, and remained in business for many years.

The first and last regular saloon was opened - and closed - in 1884. It was housed in a very small building, and had a rather bad reputation. Before three weeks had passed, the saloon had been "shot up", and the "chebang" had been turned upside down with a helpless keeper witnessing the incident.

The Norway Gun Club was of a more peaceful character, organizing practice shooting for the dozen members. The target was usually a glass ball; later clay pigeons were used. There were complaints in the newspaper about the mass of glass fragments which covered the practice ground after the happy events.

In a larger perspective, however, such fragments are of course overshadowed by the two key institutions of school and church.

10.5 SCHOOL

No school records have been available for the first pioneering years in the Norwegian settlements in Doniphan County. It is likely that the settlers who began coming to Kansas from Missouri in the late 1850s saw it as one of their main objectives to establish a school, or at least be able to make use of the American schools in the neighbourhood. They carried with them the same attitudes that marked the initial settlement in St. Joseph, but by coming to Kansas, they refined or even strengthened their Lutheran belonging, and the possibility of resorting to Catholic educational institutions was out of the question. It is probable that a combination of teaching in the homes of the farmers, and regular attendance in American

²⁷ Osul Nelson, 1871. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 5.

schools co-existed until the mid-sixties; preserved school records for Doniphan County establish the fact that by 1869 a county school system had been organized, in satisfactory locations, and with qualified teachers.²⁸ The Census Returns for Doniphan County in 1860 state that at least six of the Norwegian children in the settlement had “attended school within the year”: Nels Nelson (13), Gusta Nelson (ten), Molly Nelson (11), Nickolas Nelson (nine), Julia Nelson (seven), and Oscar Nelson (five).

By 1869 there were 74 school districts in the county, and of these no. forty-eight is of special importance. Situated about two miles from *East Norway*, this school came to be known as the *Norwegian school*. The name is perhaps somewhat misleading. It is true that it catered for pupils who in most cases were of Norwegian origin, but it was otherwise an American school, run by American teachers who used English as their teaching language.²⁹

The *Norwegian School* was in operation in the middle 1860s, using a log cabin belonging to Chris Turkleson, and the first teacher was Miss Betty Pry from the neighbouring town of Severance.³⁰ It is, however, important to note that for the first time in the history of the Norwegian settlements in Missouri/ Kansas, the Norwegian settlers began taking part in the running of the local schools, or for that matter accepting a minor public office: Osul Anderson was a treasurer of the school district, and Anders Anderson was director of the school board. Before them, the *pater familias* Osul Nelson has been a forerunner also in this context and had as the only pioneer of the first generation done service as “school-master”, minister’s assistant, church warden, and member of the jury in the court in Troy.³¹

Information about the *Norwegian school* is scarce, and the exuberant descriptions offered by *The Illustrated Doniphan County* (1916) and P.L. Gray are included here as personal comments rather than well-founded information.

*The schools are excellent, the children are taught both their parents’ tongue and English, and the progress which they make later, when entering the Doniphan County high schools and the Kansas State colleges, speak volumes for the instructors, procured by the officials of the place.*³²

It is difficult to assess the information that the children also were taught their parents’ mother tongue. It is likely that some additional cultural knowledge about Norway and the

²⁸ “History of Doniphan County Schools” (*The Illustrated Doniphan County*, 1916): 48.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Gray’s Doniphan County History*: 52.

³¹ Osul Nelson, 1866-69. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 4.

³² *The Illustrated Doniphan County*: 173.

Norwegian heritage was used in the school, but such an element was secondary and for all practical purpose subordinated to the use of English. [It is noteworthy that the oldest “Norwegians” in present-day Troy say that they never used Norwegian at home or in school, although their parents were newcomers in America; see 10.5 (note)].

The school had many friendly spelling contests in the early times [the 1860s], with its neighbors, and especially the Wolf River school near Bayne’s bridge. The boys and girls that attended those spelling matches are now wearing locks of grey, but their eyes brighten when the subject of spelling school is mentioned, and the young folks, who are wise enough to listen, are certain to hear of something to their interest and amusement, in the line of a story that is certain to be told.

*It is one of the most widely known schools in the county, and has always employed capable teachers, paying generous salaries.*³³

On July 1, 1880, *The Weekly Kansas Chief* reported briefly on the school in *East Norway*, indicating that attendance was not always satisfactory (like any Norwegian rural school experiencing a need for extra farm labour in periods), children of Norwegian settlers dominated the list of pupils with perfect deportment, parents and relatives had taken an interest in school, and the teacher was a non-Norwegian:

School report of term ending June 25, 1880, length of term nine months. Total of pupils enrolled 69, and average daily attendance 35. Pupils perfect in deportment: ... Anna Hoverson, Mollie Hoverson, Oscar Hoverson, Lee Hoverson, and David Hardy. Visitors during the term: C. O. Turkleson, Charles Hardy, Miss Anna Nelson, Miss Corda Hoverson. By J. M. Latta, teacher.

By contrast, the sustained efforts made by family historian Nora C. Nelson to secure recorded material about early church organization in the “Norwegian” settlements in Buchanan and Doniphan Counties, have smoothed the path towards an understanding of the second main cultural cornerstone in the colony.

10.6 CHURCH

As mentioned earlier, the histories of the Norwegian congregations in Buchanan and Doniphan Counties are parallel ones. Particularly in the first years of settlement in Missouri,

³³ *Gray’s Doniphan County History*: 52.

the pioneers were in reality forced to manage on their own as far as church services were concerned. Only with the arrival of Laurentius Larsen in 1860, was a church structure established, and a process initiated which came to its completion with the First Lutheran Church in St. Joseph near the turn of the century.

Also in the case of the Norwegian daughter colony in Doniphan County, the settlers in the first years had to satisfy their religious needs with services in their own homes, and the assistance of itinerant pastors and missionaries. From about 1860, however, there are records preserved which shed light on the formation on the three main congregations among the Norwegians in north-eastern Kansas: the Brush Creek Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Wayne Township, the Upper Wolf Evangelical Lutheran Congregation near Robinson in Brown County, and the Prairie Grove and East Norway (Moray) Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Wolf River Township.³⁴

The Brush Creek Congregation was founded by Laurentius Larsen during his visit to the small Norwegian communities near the border between Missouri and Kansas in 1860. The Rev. Laurentius Larsen was their pastor from 1860 to 1861, and was followed by the Rev. A. C. Preus in 1861. The Rev. David Earhart remained with the congregation for ten years, from 1861-1871, and was replaced by the Rev. N. C. Brun in 1871. In addition, there are entries in the Brush Creek Parish Register, showing that Pastor O. Niels baptized and preached in the congregation in 1868. Pastoral services were also given by the Rev. M. Falch Gjertsen between 1868 and 1870.

After Laurentius Larsen and A. C. Preus' visits to the area in 1860-61, the Brush Creek Evangelical Lutheran Congregation was finally organized by the Rev. David Earhart on May 24, 1862. There were 34 charter members: 19 of these had been mentioned on the previous records by Laurentius Larsen. Four years later, 16 members transferred to the East Norway Congregation when it was organized in 1866. Another charter member, Ole Erickson, was among those who joined the Upper Wolf Congregation, also organized in 1866.

³⁴ Among the papers left by the late Nora C. Nelson, there were copies of church records from the three congregations mentioned above. Miss Nelson had in all probability come across these records in her incessant work to locate historical material kept by the oldest "Norwegian" members of the communities. Presumably these records were written by the ministers, but there are also examples of minutes kept by key members in the congregations. The material was accessed by courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO. The original records have not been located. The parish registers kept by the Rev. David Earhart was preserved by Mr. Robert Clemmetson, and has been deposited in the archives of the Lutheran Church of America in Omaha, Nebraska.

In a letter from Nels Guttormsen Thompson in 1862, there is a comment on the transition between pastors Larsen and Earhart:³⁵

I also want to tell you that we have fenced in a cemetery or burial ground, ½ acre, which Professor Larsen has consecrated for the Norwegians, and where there are already buried 8 persons.³⁶ It is a beautiful place, about 1 ¼ Norwegian mile from here – We have also got an English Lutheran minister named Erharth, who seems to be a godfearing and decent man whom we all respect and love, we have had him for 1 year, and shall have him for one more. 3 weeks ago we founded a Norwegian congregation,³⁷ the twenty and some families in the neighbourhood, the same minister administers a church service every four weeks, Holy Communion twice a year, infant baptism and wedding ceremonies when asked to, and he catechizes the youngsters after each sermon.

During Laurentius Larsen's stay with the settlers in Doniphan County, he officiated at 11 baptisms and twelve confirmations. The list of children baptized in the years 1860-61 contains no names linked to the original "Landvik-group" in St. Joseph, but rather to the groups of immigrants who arrived in New York in 1849 and 1850. The records kept by Larsen mostly preserve the Norwegian name versions, and show that the baptisms were for:

Anne Johanne Elertson, b. August 7, 1859 (parents: Mr. & Mrs. Peter Elertson)
 Elvine Gurine Thronson, b. October 9, 1859 (parents: Mr. & Mrs. Gunder Thronson)
 Thomas Klemetson, b. February 17, 1860 (parents: Mr. & Mrs. Ole Klemetson)
 Ole Severin Eriksen, b. April 24, 1859 (parents: Mr. & Mrs. Ole Erickson)
 Hans Martin Hansen, b. September 23, 1860 (parents: Mr. & Mrs. Ole Hansen)
 Pauline Sophie Larsen, b. May 24, 1860 (parents: Mr. & Mrs. Nels Larsen)
 Christine Katrine Anne Welde, b. October 28, 1859 (parents: Mr. & Mrs. Chr. Welde)
 Adeline Marie Guttormsen Thompson, b. October 12, 1860 (parents: Mr. & Mrs. Nels Thompson)
 Anna Jane Thronson, b. October 17, 1860 (parents: Mr. & Mrs. Gunder Thronson)
 Nels Olaus Hansen, b. March, 1856 (parents: Mr. & Mrs. Thorsten Hansen)
 Anne Marie Hansen, b. February 16, 1858 (parents: Mr. & Mrs. Thorsten Hansen)

³⁵ Nils Guttormsen Thompson, 1862. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 16.

³⁶ Kinghill Cemetery.

³⁷ The Brush Creek Evangelical Lutheran Congregation.

Two of the confirmands at Brush Creek, Nels Olaus Nelson and Grete Marie Nelson, were children of Anders Nelson (Holte) from the St. Joseph congregation, and also the names of Hoverson and Anderson are reminiscent of the Missouri settlement. The names in the list point to the fact that confirmation had not been possible since their arrival in 1847, and the age span is therefore considerable, including both youngsters and adult women.

Helene Nelson
 Elise Talette Thronsen
 Karen Guttormsen Thompson
 Ole Hoverson
 Berthe Marie Guttormsen Thompson
 Bent Guttormsen Thompson
 Osul Anderson
 Maren Guttormsen (Mrs. Ole Hansen)
 Gunborg Anderson (Mrs. Olsen Dannevig)
 Tomine Klemetson (Mrs. Gunder Thronson)
 Nels Olaus Nelson
 Grete Marie Nelson

The Rev. David Earhart organized the congregation at Brush Creek with 20 charter members in 1861. For many years this loyal and earnest Lutheran worked through the pioneer days to preach the gospel and establish the Lutheran Church in the new country. At the same time, he was preaching on a circuit of over a hundred miles, for the churches in Doniphan and Brown Counties, and he also began holding services in St. Joseph. Owing to removals, the congregation at Brush Creek was disbanded before the organization of the Kansas Synod.

In the Historical Supplement of the *Illustrated Kansas Chief* of Troy, 1916, there is a short mention of the congregation at Brush Creek:

The Norwegian Lutheran Church in Wayne Township was built in 1871, and dedicated the same year. The land on which the church was located contains half an acre, and was donated by Lars Nelson. The church building cost about \$400. The first preacher was the Rev. Mr. Brown [Brun], a native of Norway who remained but a short time.

The history of the Upper Wolf Evangelical Lutheran Congregation near Robinson, in Brown County, is very unclear since there are hardly any records preserved. It seems evident, however, that the congregation was part of David Earhart's circuit, and that the establishment owed its existence to the work of this intrepid preacher. Judging from Miss Nelson's notes, the congregation was founded in 1866, and in the following years saw the services of pastors M.F. Gjertsen, N.C. Brun, H. P. Bertelsen, P.S. Hendricksen, and H. C. Rønnes. The congregation was attached to the Augustana Synod until 1870, and later affiliated with the United Church. To complicate matters, there is also the mention of a "St. Paul's Congregation" in the same area, south of Robinson, where two pastors are named: G.M. Erdahl and Nehem Christensen.

In the minutes of the East Norway Congregation there is information which shows that the three congregations must have cooperated because they united to buy a parsonage for the Rev. David Earhart who served them all.

In the spring of 1862, the Rev. David Earhart began preaching in Osul Nelson's house in Wolf River Township. After two years, the services were moved to Abram Bennett's house, and when the district school house was finished, the congregation was yet again moved. The period of unwelcome uncertainties came to an end on May 24, 1866, when the Prairie Grove and East Norway Evangelical Lutheran Church was officially organized. The founding members were the following:³⁸

Charles Ladwig (German settler)

Caroline Ladwig (German settler)

Albert Ladwig (German settler)

John Albers (German settler)

Caroline Albers (German settler)

Osul Nelson (of the original 1846 migration to St. Joseph)

Gunnel Nelson (of the original 1846 migration to St. Joseph)

Gurine Nelson (of the original 1846 migration to St. Joseph)

Molly Nelson (of the original 1846 migration to St. Joseph)

Nels Nelson (of the original 1846 migration to St. Joseph)

Hans Nelson (Arnesen), (married to Åse Nelson, came with the Nelsons to Kansas in 1857)

³⁸ From a copy of *the Church Book of Prairie Grove Evangelical Lutheran Church of East Norway*, preserved by Mrs. O.L. Steanson of Troy, KS. By courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO.

Osa (Åse) Nelson (of the original 1846 migration to St. Joseph)
 Guttorm Steanson (of the 1850 migration to New York/ Missouri)
 Chris. Terkelson (came to Kansas ca. 1860)
 Augusta Nelson (of the original 1846 migration to St. Joseph)
 Sarah Wilson (?) (Nelson ?)

This list is interesting for at least two reasons: it points to the fact that German and Norwegian immigrants would cooperate in the establishment and the future development of the Lutheran church in East Norway, and Osul Nelson and members of his family were key citizens of the small community from the very start.

In an article on the Scandinavians in Wolf River Township, published in the *Illustrated Doniphan County, 1916*, Chris. Turkleson, the only original settler alive in 1916, repeats the details of the pioneer years when services were held in private homes until a church was organized by the Rev. David Earhart. Their church building was dedicated in 1883, with the Rev. Charles Martin of St. Joseph as their pastor. Not all the members were Norwegians; there were also German and Danish settlers among them. It is noted as a peculiar fact that nearly all the pastors after 1883 were Germans, and they preached in English.

In the early period, there was a sentiment among the Norwegian settlers that they ought to have the gospel preached in their mother tongue. In some way, they shared the conviction that a sermon delivered in English lacked a certain amount of conviction and sincerity. Consequently, the Rev. David Earhart was succeeded in 1871 by the Rev. N.C. Brun, and the Rev. Hendrickson took over in 1875. They both conducted their services in Norwegian. When the Rev. Charles Martin took charge in 1878, the situation had changed. Many years had passed since the first settlement was established, and more of the people in *East Norway* spoke English rather than Norwegian. The constitution of the church was therefore altered, and a by-law inserted to the effect that the services would be in English only.

In the history of Norwegian Lutherans in America it was by no means uncommon that the settlers wished and fought to retain the use of Norwegian in church. Religion was the bedrock of their identity, and was in many ways the last barrier in the inevitable process leading towards assimilation and “Americanization”, although the tempo in the process would differ, not least as a result of the actual number of immigrants in the settlement. In a symbolic and of course practical way, the immigrants brought with them a spiritual baggage indicating the profound importance of their faith: family Bibles, instructions for church services and

prayer books, bound volumes of printed sermons, and Luther's Little Catechism. The Norwegian congregations in Doniphan County, however, differ from their brethren in and around St. Joseph, Missouri. After the departure of Laurentius Larsen, the Lutheran congregations in St. Joseph showed a steadfast progress towards assimilation and "Americanization". They mostly shared pastors with Germans and Americans, and their position as a minority group in a mixed-nationality congregation, obviously made the question of the use of Norwegian in church only of academic interest. For Peder Nelson and his younger relations, English had very early become their natural and probably preferred language.

In Kansas, however, there was a noteworthy relapse into the use of Norwegian in church in the years 1871 to 1878, the *interregnum* from the time the Rev. David Earhart resigned and was replaced by the Rev. C. M. Altman in East Norway. During those six years, Norwegian pastors brought Norwegian language back to the congregation, in ritual and sermons, and thereby must have slowed down linguistic assimilation.

In the Rev. Martin's pastorate, the East Norway/Moray church was built in 1883, "a pretty frame building, thirty-two by thirty feet, with tower and belfry costing \$3,200 and had not a cent of indebtedness when it was dedicated."³⁹ A building committee had been appointed, consisting of Chris. Turkleson, John Hoverson, and John Albers; their main duty was to solicit subscriptions and set up a contract with a construction company. The Rev. Martin led the opening church service, using the ordinary American Lutheran rituals, and delivering his sermon in English. The congregation saw it fit to make a deposit in the cornerstone, and emphasize that the church would be administered in accordance with the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession. The deposit contained the following articles:

- A copy of the Holy Scripture
- A copy of Luther's Catechism
- A copy of the *Lutheran Observer*
- A copy of the *Kansas Chief*
- A United States coin of the value of five cents, dated 1883.⁴⁰

Doctor Martin had led the congregation for 16 years when he was succeeded by the Rev. F.D. Altman, the first in a row of German ministers who would take the congregation into the

³⁹ *The Illustrated Doniphan County, 1916*: 173.

⁴⁰ "Laying of the cornerstone for Church", report in records of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in East Norway, dated April 14, 1883. Found in Miss Nora C. Nelson's material. By courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO.

next century. The *Illustrated Doniphan County* enables us to view the East Norway settlement from another perspective, and see what kind of assessment the newspaper gave the Norwegian settlers after 75 years in Doniphan County (though a reader must be willing to shred off certain exuberances of generous praise).

*The Moray church is counted the most prosperous in the Kansas synod; its women's home and foreign missionary society stands on a better financial basis than any similar society in the state. ... The church gave \$725 about four years ago to outside benevolences, which is remarkable. ... Their homes are the finest, their barns the biggest, their farms the best kept, the men the best workers, and the wives and children the happiest and best provided for in the state of Kansas. ... No community in the state is better to its preachers. Many of the farmers regularly plant a "preacher's row" of potatoes. There are always spring chickens and turkeys for the preachers' families. ... And they are good to each other, and discussions, differences, and lawsuits are unknown.*⁴¹

⁴¹ *The Illustrated Doniphan County*, 1916: 174.

10.7 A CASE STUDY: OSUL NELSON – AN AGING FARMER



Osul and Gunnhild Nelson, ca. 1865. In a letter from 1867, Osul Nelson wrote: “I said about these pictures that they resembled more dead than living people, and therefore her picture is appropriate as it resembles her on her deathbed.” *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 3.* By courtesy of Anna Igländ Bendixen.

When Osul Nelson decided to move into Kansas with his family, he was 55 years old, a seasoned and experienced farmer and settler. In Norway he had been a respected and conscientious member of his small community, a partaker in political affairs, well-read, and characterized by his stamina and willingness to venture into the nearly unknown. His ten years as a farmer in Buchanan County had taught him the American ways, and his diligent work on his 240 acres of land had given him the opportunity to use this capital to extend and improve his standing by selling his property and purchasing new and presumably better land in Doniphan County. As mentioned earlier, the main drive to move further west was undoubtedly the tempting prospect of making a sound financial deal and improving the chances for a better life for his children. To what extent his relation to his cousin Peder Nelson may have contributed in making the decision is uncertain, or if the move was connected to the question and practise of slavery in Missouri. He was first among the

“Landvik-group” to cross the Missouri, but was soon followed by other Norwegians, to the extent that Doniphan County for the rest of the period of settlement was a stronger attraction to Norwegian immigrants than Buchanan County.

None of the three leaders of the exodus in 1846 had been young men when the journey started. Peder Nelson (Kalvehaven) was 52 years old, Osul Nelson (Enge) 44, and Anders Nelson (Holte) 37. Anders Nelson had lost his wife and two children on or shortly after arrival in New Orleans, and took a long time to recuperate from those losses. He volunteered for service in the army together with some of the young men in the company, and made his claim for land only after his duties on the Oregon Trail were ended. Consequently, the two other men in the triumvirate came to represent leadership and continuity in the mother and daughter colony which developed. In the 1860s, however, all three of them had begun to suffer from ailments of approaching old age, and the expressions of joy and contentment at having reached the *Promised Land*, were replaced in their letters by sentiments of resignation and sadness, but still with a strong religious conviction.

*I have on a couple of occasions in the last years been haunted by my old chest ailment, but it has gone away rather quickly. Gunnil is also strong yet, as she has always been, but we are both getting old. For my part I have to use glasses, as my eyesight is so diminished that I cannot read a thing in a book without them.*⁴²

*I have the heavy duty to inform you that my beloved wife passed away on last June 9, after 4 months' illness. We did everything for her recovery, but all in vain. ... Whatever we did, it was God's will, and death was her best doctor, wherewith she was well pleased. It is not right for me to complain, but rather be thankful for the almighty ruler who has let us live happily together for 40 years, and with confidence that we shall be gathered in a better world.*⁴³

*When it comes to myself, I have nothing to say. I and my wife are beginning to feel the burdens of old age, and my gout bothers me a lot.*⁴⁴

We must be satisfied at the will of the almighty, and be ready to follow when he calls, and gladly leave this earthly abode and by the grace of God to gather in the

⁴² Osul Nelson, 1854. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 2.

⁴³ Osul Nelson, 1867. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 3.

⁴⁴ Anders Nelson (Holte), 1871. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 11.

*houses of the blessed. I am now 65 years old, and have been frail for many years, so I suspect I do not have many years left to live.*⁴⁵

*I and my wife are the same as before. Our limbs are stiff and heavy, so it is difficult to make use of them, but thank God we do not suffer from any internal illness, and we must thank him that we are this well, and that we to some degree are able to help ourselves.*⁴⁶

Osul Nelson had made a scouting expedition into Doniphan County about one year before he brought his family across the Missouri in 1857, and made his claim in Wolf River Township. He had used the ten years in Buchanan County well; he was the owner of a least 50 improved acres land, and also 190 unimproved acres. In 1850 his farm was valued at \$2,000. He had invested in new implements, such as ploughs, had improved his houses, and had reaped the harvests of wheat, corn, oats, and hemp. There were one horse, three milch cows, 12 hogs, and eight working oxen on the farm.⁴⁷

In Doniphan County he was able to extend his property, as well as helping his children to settle in a satisfactory manner. The Census Returns of 1860 show that he by then owned 393 acres of land, and his son Tyra had purchased 160 acres.⁴⁸ He would meet with personal disaster when his wife Gunnhild died in 1867, but he also enjoyed the happiness of seeing his daughters married: Aase to Hans Arnesen, Gurine to Lars Nilsen Haabesland (Lewis Nelson), Maren to Charles Hardy, Trine to Samuel Hardy, and Augusta to Ebert Simon. His two sons followed suit: Tyra (Terje) was married to Mariette Donnilson, and Nels Gustav to Margaret Andrews.⁴⁹ In 1871, Osul Nelson went back to Norway to visit friends and relatives, and was given a grand welcome. He must have appreciated the warm words and the songs written to his praise, but one may assume that Anne Pedersdatter warmed his heart even more. She went with him back to America to become his second wife. She was a widow, and brought with her three children, Osul, Peter, and Ingeborg. The two young men would soon marry Jacobine Nelson Thompson and Mary Nelson Thompson, respectively.⁵⁰

As far as family affairs go, Osul Nelson had the satisfaction in his mature years to see his offspring well established on farms and in other kinds of business close to his own

⁴⁵ Osul Nelson, 1867. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 3.

⁴⁶ Anders Nelson (Holte), 1879. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 13.

⁴⁷ Tables 9.9 and 10.4.

⁴⁸ There were no agricultural statistical censuses taken in Kansas prior to 1877.

⁴⁹ See *Index*, 1846.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

property in Wolf River Township. The family in many ways dominated the affairs in the little community in the early period of settlement: in church, farming matters, and social affairs. They also showed a growing interest for tasks connected to the civic machinery in the township.

The development of the various congregations in the Norwegian communities in Doniphan County has already been covered. It may therefore suffice to repeat Osul Nelson's central position in the process of establishing Lutheran communities in Wolf River Township. In nearly all surviving church records from the period of settlement, his name is repeatedly mentioned, and in his letter from around 1868, the aging farmer tells that he has been entrusted with the task of serving as the minister's assistant and church warden. At the time of his writing the letter, he has been excused from most obligations because of his age, except from his duties as the minister's assistant.⁵¹

Osul Nelson's letter to relatives in Norway in 1867 sheds light on his and his family's situation on the farm in Doniphan County.⁵² The seasoned farmer explains that he has about 100 acres of cultivated, fenced-in land. In other words, he has doubled the area of cultivated land compared to the records of 1850 in Missouri. The house is half-timbered with bricks, 1 ½ stories high, with a porch and three rooms downstairs, and two attics upstairs. They have good water from a well by the kitchen door, with good water supplies. Close by, there is a barn with room for four horses, and also a couple of sheds for three cows and some sheep. To complete the little cluster of buildings is a smithy, a smokehouse and a hen house. In his own comment, one cannot expect to do much in only ten years. But he is content to have planted 300 fruit trees, which are now beginning to bear fruit.⁵³ He has also invested money in farm machinery, e.g. a machine to cut hemp, wheat, barley, oats, and hay. It is drawn by two to six horses, and is complemented by a rake, drawn by one horse only. The corn is harvested by means of a "kind of plough"; it looks like a two-wheeled carriage, drawn by two horses. "Here are many work-saving inventions which are very profitable since the wages are so high."

The actual running of the farm mirrors his situation as a rather frail and aging settler.

⁵¹ Osul Nelson, 1866-69. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 4.

⁵² Osul Nelson, 1867. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 3.

⁵³ The farmers from Hommedal Parish brought with them a tradition for the growing of fruit. Peder Nelson cherished his *Dolholt* pears, and his son Nels Peter established himself as a prize-winning fruit-farmer in Weston, MO. On October 25, 1877, *The Kansas Weekly Chief* contained the following item: ... *In speaking of fine orchards, we would mention Osul Nelson's. He has one of the finest orchards in Wolf River Township. The old gentleman sells large quantities of apples every fall in all parts of Doniphan and Brown Counties. He tends his orchard with great interest and is a good judge of good fruit.*

Last year, his two sons Terje (Tyra) and Nils worked the land, and gave the father part of the crops to live on, “and they deserved good payment.”⁵⁴ This year, Nils is running the place alone, since Terje is occupied taking care of his own farm, a full quarter section. Before he started this work, he was the owner of 40 acres. The farmers in the area have, however, met with severe difficulties, putting their harvests in jeopardy. Masses of grasshoppers have invaded the region, and while they did not do much harm at first as the crops had been harvested, they placed their brood in the earth to be hatched when the spring heat came. “As they grew, their greed increased, so they have ruined the hemp, wheat, and barley, they do not like oats that well, nor have they damaged the corn considerably yet.”⁵⁵

After Osul Nelson had sold his farm in Norway, and paid the expenses for the passage to America, he presumably had about \$1,000 to invest in a new farm. Most of the other farmers in the company may have been in the same financial situation, whereas Peder Nelson brought with him considerably larger sums of money. In other words, Peder Nelson had a head-start compared to his cousin, and it may therefore be of interest to see how the two pioneers fared economically in the following years.

Table 10.5: A comparison of the estates of Peder Nelson and Osul Nelson. Source: the Census Returns for Buchanan County, MO and Doniphan County, KS, 1850, 1860, 1870; paper editions, Public Libraries in St. Joseph, MO and Troy, KS:

Census returns	Peder Nelson		Osul Nelson	
Year	Real estate	Personal estate	Real estate	Personal estate
1850	\$10,000	-	\$2,000	-
1860	\$5,000*	\$5,000	\$1,600	\$500
1870	\$4,000	\$3,300**	\$12,600	\$2,350

* In the returns, Peder Nelson is listed with \$ 50,000, which obviously must be a clerical error.

** Around 1860, Peder Nelson had started helping his children to establish themselves on his wide tracts of land. By 1870, his son George (Jørgen) had become co-owner of his farm.

Shortly after arrival in St. Joseph, Peder Nelson purchased large expanses of land, and in a way overshadowed the other Norwegians who had less financial means. These other farmers were in possession of estates worth between \$800 and \$2,000. Peder Nelson used his advantage to help and to gather his children and their in-laws on his land, transferring his

⁵⁴ Osul Nelson, 1867. *Letters from the Pioneers no. 3.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

wealth, and letting George take over the daily routines as his own health began to deteriorate with age. It is therefore reasonable that his assets diminished, and that his children enjoyed a growing prosperity. Osul Nelson was slower in building his assets, and probably more reluctant in letting his offspring take over the farm. It is true that his children made their claims close to their father's land, but it seems that Osul Nelson held on to his estate. In 1870, he is listed with a real estate of \$12,600, having doubled his improved acreage after the move from Missouri. In both cases, it seems fair to conclude that the two pioneers were successful, managed to secure a future for their children, and were regarded as men of fortune at the end of their lives.

Table 10.6: Development of real estate and personal estate of the Osul Nelson family and Lewis Nelson, 1860 and 1865; Wolf River Township, Doniphan County, KS; Census Returns 1860, 1865.⁵⁶

Name	Age	1860		Age	1865	
		Real estate	Personal estate		Real estate	Personal estate
Osul Nelson	58	\$1,600	\$500	63	\$4,600	\$1,700
Tyra Nelson	21	-	-	26	\$1,100	\$400
Lewis Nelson	38	\$1,400	\$300	43	\$4,000	\$760

As shown in table 6.27, the harvests on the small farms in Hommedal Parish only satisfied the basic needs for the peasants and their growing number of children. They found themselves in a transition period between subsistence farming and the coming system of capitalist agriculture with its dependence upon market conditions, and their emigration to America brought them into a close and rapidly expanding contact with agrarian capitalism.

It would be tempting to venture into a direct comparison of harvests and income on the "emigrant" farms, i.e. in Norway and America. For many reasons such a project raises insurmountable difficulties. Agriculture in Missouri and Kansas in the latter half of the 19th century had taken decisive steps in the direction of a market economy, with the fluctuation in prices for agricultural produce playing an increasingly important role. On their arrival in 1847, the Norwegian pioneers had seen the waning of a semi-subsistence agriculture, and its replacement by a dependency upon cash crops and the availability of expanding markets. In

⁵⁶ Copy of statistical data supplied by the Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS.

their first years they tilled the soil almost in the old way, harvested a variety of crops, made the most of hemp - their main cash crop - and saw it as a necessity to purchase various domestic animals like cows, pigs, sheep, and hens.⁵⁷ At the end of the 60s, there was a tendency to streamline their production, and rely on staple crops like wheat and corn, and rely to a lesser degree on small-scale livestock. In this manner, they foreshadow the status of Kansas as the “bread-basket” of the United States. Also, crops in Norway and America were different, and the immigrants had little or no experience with e.g. corn and hemp. Should one after all try to compare the two systems, overlooking the incompatibility, and leaving hemp out of the equation, the frontier farms come off with a large production surplus compared to the old country. If barley is taken as the basic crop, and corn is equated with barley, the production on Osul Nelson’s farm in St. Joseph gave more than six times the harvest per capita compared to what he had achieved in Hommedal Parish.⁵⁸ And then hemp is not even counted, and in Kansas the acreage at disposal would be doubled. Put differently, in Norway Osul Nelson grew 2.7 “tønder” per capita; in Missouri the figure would be more than 20 “tønder”.⁵⁹ But of course, this is mere speculation, and one should refrain from putting too much weight on such a play with numbers. There seems, however, to be little doubt that both Peder Nelson and Osul Nelson were far better off as farmers in America than they had been in Norway.

During his last years in Kansas, until his death in 1880, Osul Nelson’s letters became shorter and less detailed. It may therefore be of interest to observe what two of his neighbours reported in their letters to relatives in Norway. Nils Guttormsen Thompson and Thomas (Guttorm) Steanson were of the 1850 migration, but had both settled in Doniphan County in the 1860s, were part of the closely-knit Norwegian community, had a common background, and mirror the experiences shared by the farmers in the area.

Nils Guttormsen Thompson in his letter from 1862 relates that he came to Kansas from Missouri two years ago, having sold his first farm for \$1,100, and bought 160 acres for \$1,500. “The first year the crops were only so-and-so, but God be praised, I harvested enough

⁵⁷ Clarence H. Danhof describes the “normal” situation on frontier farms in the early stages of settlement: “[Cultivation] [was] concentrated upon those products that would satisfy immediate requirements with a minimum of capital and effort. These were usually wheat and corn, oats, and perhaps small patches of rye, barley, and potatoes, supplemented by a number of hogs, a few cattle, some bush and tree fruits, and a garden patch.” *Change in Agriculture*: 149.

⁵⁸ See table 6.27 and comments in Chapter VI.

⁵⁹ 1 “tønde” = ca. four bushels.

to feed he cattle, but many [farmers] got little, or nothing because of a prolonged draught in the summer. Last year, however, we were well off.”⁶⁰

Nils Guttormsen Thompson goes on to list in detail his achievements in the fields. He has harvested 167 bushels of winter wheat, whereas spring wheat, rye, and oats have yielded 395 bushels. In addition he has brought to the market more than 250 bushels of corn, and about three tons of hemp. He has also harvested “some other minor crops which are too cumbersome to list, so you might understand that when the Lord gives us his blessing, it is a very fertile land.”⁶¹ His livestock has also become numerous and varied: two horses and a foal, four milch cows with oxen and calves, in all 12, 17 pigs, some sheep, and 75 hens.

When it comes to prices on the market, they are low. Winter wheat is sold at 65 cents a bushel, spring wheat at 40, barley at 30, potatoes at ten to 15, and oats at 25. On the other hand, he has sold livestock at a profit, but has also seen the hemp production destroyed by fire in the storage sheds. The produce was insured, he hopes for compensation, but the value was set too low at \$40 a ton. A tentative estimated yearly income would, on the basis of the information given in the letter, be in the region of \$5-600, not taking into consideration his expenses for seed corn, fertilizers, hired help, machinery etc., and leaving hemp out of the question. In his *Pathfinder*, Johan Reinert Reiersen had somewhat optimistically calculated the necessary capital for the settler, his expenses, and his way towards a surplus of production and “cash in hand.”⁶² Nils Guttormsen Thompson was in a favourable position, he had gone through the initial stages of a newly-arrived settler, and had been able to invest the money he gained from the sale of his farm in Missouri. In a first year, Reiersen estimated the total costs, including implements, machinery and building of houses, to be in the region of \$560. Thompson had a better working capital and must have invested in house utensils, furniture, and implements prior to his move to Kansas. It is therefore reasonable to assume that even at a time with drought problems and produce destroyed in fire, he was able to put aside “cash in hand”, and consolidate his position as a Kansas farmer.

Six to seven years later, Guttorm (Thomas) Steanson was evidently in an even better position, and does not hide his pride and even smug contentment of doing well as a farmer. He has had a very good crop this year, and has harvested 60 bushels of wheat, and is satisfied

⁶⁰ Nils Guttormsen Thompson, 1862. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 16.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Johan Reinert Reiersen. *The Pathfinder*: 115-119.

with his produce of oats and corn. He has 14 acres of hemp: "my hemp alone will make 10 or 11 hundred dollars."⁶³

I have now started a new house which will cost \$2,000 when I finish it. Outward it is finished, but the winter stopped me from doing more. In the spring I shall plaster it. It is a building with 7 rooms on the ground floor and two rooms on the loft. ... The front is 36 feet wide and 16 feet deep and with two outside porches, one 8 feet deep and 20 feet long. The other 6 feet deep and 8 feet long. There are 10 doors and 12 windows.

I run my farm with a good deal of machines. I plant my corn with one machine. I have also a reaper pulled by 4 horses to harvest wheat, oats, barley, hemp, and hay. It cost 210 dollars. A threshing machine is operated by 8-10 horses and stands on wheels so it can be moved from one place to another without trouble. Such a machine costs 700 dollars.

I have a farm-hand the whole year and pay him 200 dollars. Another day-worker is paid 1 dollar a day, except during harvest time when he gets 2 dollars a day and board.

From the 1870 onwards there was a tendency among the pioneers in the Norwegian communities in Missouri and Kansas to step aside and let the younger generation take over practical affairs on their farms. Peder Nelson must also have been aware of tax benefits as he let his son George become co-owner, and thereby avoid heavy taxation of inheritance. Osul Nelson was perhaps more reluctant to take such a step, but his sons Tyra and Nels Gustav began to move ahead on their own in the 60s and 70s. Both sons helped their ailing father running the farm, extended the acreage with land of their own, and eventually moved to Nebraska to have a try in cattle farming. As already mentioned, Tyra had a side occupation as a blacksmith in *East River Township*, and in 1876 *The Kansas Weekly Chief* reported on his activities in connection with the warehouse in *East Norway*:⁶⁴

Farmers are delivering grain in large quantities and storing in Tyra Nelson's Warehouse and are satisfied that the corn crop is going to prove an entire success even though the grasshoppers come today. Nelson is buying all kinds of grain for which he is buying the very highest market price and as there is great supply of it in

⁶³ Guttorm (Thomas) Steanson, 1866-67. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 18.

⁶⁴ *The Kansas Weekly Chief*, August 31, 1876. Anna M. Francis, op. cit.

this township there is no question that there will be more shipping from and to this station than any previous year.

The combined efforts of the first two generations brought greater prosperity, and the fight for economic survival was gradually replaced by opportunities for social events and activities connected with middle-class life. As extended acreages and staple crops were consolidated, larger houses built, and modern amenities began to appear, little items start to pop up in the local newspaper, suggesting greater comfort and even affluence.

In May, 1877, *The Weekly Kansas Chief* makes it a point that people are painting their houses, "Tom Steanson, Charles Hardy, Mr. Hoverson, Tyra, Nels, and Osul Nelson, and C. O. Turkleson have all had their houses repainted outside and painted and repaired inside." Of greater significance are perhaps a series of parties and social gatherings: a social party held at Mr. Hoverson's was a "pleasant affair". The list of guests shows a concentration of second generation Norwegian-Americans, Nelsons, Hoversons, Thompsons, and Hardys. In the next month, an elaborate and successful event took place at Mrs. Bromley's.

At 7 o'clock the guests commenced to come in from all directions. They were met at the door by the kind hostess and her admirable daughter and were invited into the parlour where social games, music and sweet cider were the order of the hour. ... On entering the dining room we found that the large table was well filled with good things of all kinds from Oyster soup to the largest Turkey we ever saw in Kansas.

Only one week later, another party took place in *East Norway* at Mr. Hoverson's.

*The Surprise Party and Oyster Supper at Mr. Hoverson's last week was a success. Among those present we noted ... Miss Julia Nelson, Miss Tilda Nelson, E. Erickson, Oscar Nelson, J. O. Hardy, T. E. Hardy and a number of others.*⁶⁵

At the same time as social life began to bloom, there were also signs in the *East Norway* settlement that the first and second generation of Norwegian immigrants were beginning to accept greater responsibility in the community. Osul Nelson has been mentioned; he was the first among the Norwegians to cross the line and serve in mixed nationality assignments: as church warden, minister's assistant, teacher, and member of the jury seated in the Courthouse in Troy. But others were soon to follow his example. Ebert Simon, his son-in-law, served as Township Clerk. Nicolas, Lewis Nelson's son, became

⁶⁵ Entries in *The Kansas Weekly Chief* on October 10, November 22, November 29, 1877. Anna M. Francis, op. cit.

County Commissioner, Anders Anderson was a secretary of the congregation and a director of school boards, and an increasing number of first and second generation immigrants would serve on committees in school and church together with people of other origins than Norway.

The development of the Norwegian rural communities in Doniphan County seems to correspond well with Jon Gjerde's observation of Norwegian immigrants in the Upper Middle West. The process of assimilation probably went faster in the small Norwegian settlements in Missouri and Kansas, but they share certain characteristics with the settlements to the north. Gjerde claims that "bourgeois behaviour came to dominate the Balestrand immigrant communities."⁶⁶ Further, the increasingly bourgeois behaviour among the settlers was not the result of so-called "Americanization", but rather an outward display of a desire to prove that they had entered into "spheres of greater wealth."⁶⁷ "Their white Victorian frame houses ... also constituted an entrance into the middle class, which encouraged social patterns unlike those they had left". And just as the settlers in Missouri and Kansas had strived to secure a future for their children, "[t]he creation of a more certain existence ... provided for ample inheritances for their children."⁶⁸

In 1880, Osul Nelson died in his home in *East Norway*. He was the first of the three original leaders of the 1846 exodus to pass away, and his death definitively signalled the end of an era of pioneering initiative. On December 9, *The Kansas Weekly Chief* honoured the venerable farmer in a lengthy obituary:

The deceased was a member of the Lutheran Church for more than fifty years, often filling important offices, and was much attached to the church of his choice, and contributed liberally to its support. As a father, he was very kind and provident; as a neighbour, very obliging; as a citizen much attached to the country of his adoption; as a partisan, a staunch Republican, living until he cast his last vote for Garfield and the full Republican ticket.

Father Nelson accumulated quite a fortune. After giving largely to his children before his death, he left an estate of \$12,000 or \$ 14,000.

Six children, thirty-three grandchildren, and eighteen great grandchildren mourn the loss of Father Nelson.

⁶⁶ Jon Gjerde. *From Peasants to Farmers*: 235.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*: 236.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*: 239.

On November 29, 1880, Anne Nelson appeared before the probate court in Troy, to settle the estate left by her husband, Osul Nelson.⁶⁹ It was common knowledge that Osul Nelson was a quite wealthy man at the time of his death, and the court proceedings confirmed this. He died without a will, but his wife stated that his real estate and personal estate (evidently in addition to the value of his land) consisted chiefly of “horses, cattle, hogs, grain, and household furniture and family utensils.” The estate was estimated to be worth \$6,000. A letter of administration was then granted to John Hoverson, who shortly after arranged an auction on the Nelson farm. Judging from the array of articles laid out for sale, the home with furniture and personal belongings was kept intact, as only tools and some domestic animals were offered to potential buyers. Interested parties were mostly neighbours and relatives, and they purchased for example a cider mill (\$10), a wheelbarrow (\$ 2), a yearling heifer (\$12), two heifer calves (\$14), 21 head of hogs (\$100), one box of tools (\$ 2,50), one cow (\$ 20), one buffalo robe (\$ 10), and one box of blacksmith tools (\$ 8).⁷⁰

Fifty years after the departure from Norway in 1846, the descendants of the pioneers (126 persons after Osul Nelson, and 81 persons after Peder Nelson), assembled on Mrs. Gurine Nelson’s lawn in Troy to celebrate the anniversary. It was natural that the keynote speech was delivered by N. O. Nelson of St. Louis, Anders Nelson’s only son, who was two years old on arrival in St. Joseph in 1847. In the grand and flowery language of his time, Nels Olaus Nelson took pride in what the immigrants had achieved:⁷¹

We were Americans in spirit when we set sail, we became citizens as soon as the law allowed. From first to last, we have been part and parcel of our new home, proud of its glories, joyous in its open opportunities, partaking in its grand achievements. ... In that early colony there was earnestness, industry, helpfulness and a full cup of innocent enjoyment. In all the years I lived among them, I remember but one quarrel and one lawsuit. ... We glory in this record of ours and in the achievements of our country, in which we have been modest but loyal actors. ... From our mother country, we may learn the lesson that peace and virtue thrive without great wealth or splendid enterprises, that millionaires are not a necessary asset to a nation.

⁶⁹ “Application for letters of administration”, County of Doniphan, State of Kansas, signed by Judge Rob Williamson. By courtesy of Court House, Troy, KS.

⁷⁰ *Sale Bill of Personal Property*, the Probate Court of Doniphan County, December 20, 1880, Court House, Troy, KS.

⁷¹ Quoted in *The Kansas Weekly Chief*, September 10, 1896. Anna M. Francis, op. cit.

N. O. Nelson⁷² was certainly not a stranger to his own words. He became the prime example of the second generation of immigrants who made the most of own talent and industry and the endless and inviting opportunities of the United States.

10.8 N. O. NELSON – CAPITALIST AND PHILANTHROPIST

Although Nels Olaus Nelson was only a child when his parents emigrated from Norway, he might well represent a farmer's son who was born when nascent rural capitalism was about to be introduced in the home country, who saw the accelerating market oriented farming in the 60s and 70s in Kansas, and would be part of the fully fledged industrial capitalism in the ensuing decades. In a striking manner, N. O. Nelson exploited the advantages of America to the fullest, and exemplifies John Bodnar's contention that "neither immigration nor capitalism would have been possible without each other."⁷³ He became the first among the two pioneering generations of the "Landvik-group" who really left farming, to venture into the wider world of commerce and industrial enterprise.

After the Civil War, the dominant merchant capitalism was replaced by an industrial capitalism which rationalized production in new factories, and constantly tried to fill an ever-increasing demand for labour. Bodnar states that by 1870, the United States "had a manufacturing output equal to that of France and Germany combined. By 1913 American manufacturing output equalled France, Germany and the United Kingdom combined, and it was the chief producer of foodstuffs in the world."⁷⁴ Immigrants were essential to this whole process of rushing economic development. The immigrants represented an indispensable and skilled workforce, and the fact that they had been reared and trained in Europe, helped boost investments and growth.

Poor workers drifted towards the cities, and most newly-arrived immigrants never got any farther than the confines of the same cities. In many cases they became unwitting pawns in a game directed by powerful economic forces; they were cheap labour with little or no influence upon their own working conditions. It was an optimistic period after the Civil War which saw the benefits of increasing markets and economic growth, but also a time which saw a widening gap between capital interests and labour. As new inventions were brought to public attention in the decades prior to the turn of the century, cementing the belief that only

⁷² At least five different versions of his name are found: Nils Olaus Nelson, Nels Oliver Nelson, Nelson Oliver Nelson, Nelson Olaf Nelson, Nelson Olson Nelson.

⁷³ John Bodnar. *The Transplanted*: xviii.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*: xix.

happiness lay ahead, a dark undercurrent of unrest and dissatisfaction came to the surface in the form of an increasing number of strikes. From his home in St. Louis, N. O. Nelson, a successful industrialist and millionaire with a surprisingly humane and philanthropic side, was to become part of this struggle. He was pre-eminent among his fellow migrants from Hommedal Parish, a man who was admired and often attracted public attention, and therefore a man whose life was well-recorded.⁷⁵

During the Civil War, N. O. Nelson served as a bookkeeper with the Union Army, but declined an offer for a permanent position when the war was over. Keeping army books was good practise, though, since he had only seven months in school. He returned to Doniphan County and set up a grocer's store in Hiawatha, east of Troy. In 1868 he married Almeria Posegate, and they had two daughters, Julia and Charlotte. An invasion of grasshoppers put an end to his business in 1872. Crops were destroyed, his customers were insolvent, and the little family moved to St. Louis, where Nels Olaus got work as an accountant and rose to co-ownership after a short time in the firm. In 1876, he established his own firm, naming the business *N. O. Nelson Manufacturing Co.*, and engaged in production of all sorts of plumbing material. His company became an almost instant success: in ten years the number of employees rose to 200, and reached its peak in 1912 with a workforce of 1,200.

In the aftermath of the many bitter strikes, particularly in the railroad companies in the 70s and 80s, N. O. Nelson was thrown into the heated debate on working conditions in industry. He served as a mediator in a conflict in 1886, and was appalled at the employers' disregard for their workers. It was at this time that he started toying with the idea of shared assets and shared profit.

From Europe he had learnt that some industrialists gave their workers a percentage of the profit. In 1886, he carried through this system in his own company by transferring shares to clerks and manual workers, and paying a dividend each year. He maintained that making his workers co-owners in the firm was a way to improve their living conditions and enhance their work skills. In many respects, this was yet another instance in a long series of humanitarian measures in St. Louis and elsewhere. Quite early in his career, he had arranged free excursions on the Mississippi for poor mothers and their children, and built several

⁷⁵ The main source of information about N. O. Nelson's life and ideas is the material prepared in connection with the centennial for the founding of Nelson's ideal village of Leclaire in 1990: *N. O. Nelson: a man ahead of his time* (CD); Leclaire Centennial Committee. *The Historic Cooperative: Village of Leclaire* (Edwardsville, IL: A Centennial Collection, 1990)

swimming pools. Later, he was instrumental in setting up a retreat in Indio, California, for victims of tuberculosis.

Shortly after his effort in Indio, however, he made a bold and decisive move to realize an extension of his ideals of quality of life. He removed his company from the pollution of a big city to healthy surroundings in the countryside, invited his whole workforce to follow, and laid out a new village for them.

In 1890 a private set of wagons left the railway station in St. Louis, filled with joyous workers and their families, 400 persons in total. They were heading for Edwardsville in Illinois, and were met with music and jubilation to mark the opening of the ideal village of *Leclaire*.

The inhabitants of Leclaire were introduced to a number of initiatives which were quite astounding and seemed to encompass a whole life. Among the many facilities and benefits were for instance a library, club houses, opportunities for private insurances (illness, death, age), sports grounds (bowling, baseball, billiards, football), parks, an orchestra, cultural excursions for youngsters, schools (primary and secondary), and co-operative shops. Nels Olaus and Almeria also found a new home in Leclaire, and participated in teaching at various levels and in various subjects, such as crafts and bookkeeping.

Near the turn of the century, N. O. Nelson went a step further, and tried to create a community combining the ideas of shared assets and shared profits with the “socialist” idea of a “customer-cooperative”. He had already tried his hand at cooperative shops in Leclaire, but now he decided to share the profits also with his customers. On the basis of the value of products bought in a year, his customers were awarded a certain percentage of the shares. Nelson was using his own shares to finance this new order, and was quite aware that his fortune could shrink.⁷⁶

His use of his own wealth took a new turn when he visited New Orleans, the city where he had disembarked in 1846 and had witnessed his mother die. He was appalled at the squalor and poverty, and set about establishing a chain of cooperative shops, 63 in number, where the main concept was to give poor people cheap food at cost-prices. For seven years he remained in the city, but finally had to realize that he had exhausted his assets, much to the frustration of his family and executives in the *N. O. Nelson Manufacturing Co.*, who in reality had financed the whole ideological experiment. He had to close down the shops, and when his

⁷⁶ The Norwegian periodical *Kooperatøren* (1921): 173-174, devoted a whole article to N. O. Nelson, and made it a point to mention the sums of money he distributed in 1905 to customers, workers, and charity as a result of his shared assets and shared profits ideal: \$53.000 to his customers, \$38.000 to the workers, and \$17.500 to charity.

wife died, he retreated to a modest house and a little garden in California. “I do not care to amass more wealth”, he once remarked. “What I like is a beautiful flower garden.”⁷⁷

He may have been disillusioned at the outcome of the experiment in New Orleans, and he certainly saw the discord between his own ideals of equality and the developing snobbery in Leclaire. “They compete to have the biggest houses, they dress their daughters in silk-stockings and high-heeled shoes”, he remarked, as went about his business in California, weeding his little garden and growing vegetables.

The periodical *Skandinavianen* found that he resembled Mark Twain, and Fredrik Waage gave this description after meeting N. O. Nelson at the turn of the century:

*Nelson is of medium height, thin, but strong and resilient, with wise eyes that shine with kindness behind his steel glasses; thick, greying hair. He is as lively as a youngster and interested in all things – that deserve attention. In many ways, there is something of a Lincoln-type in him.*⁷⁸

10.9 THE SETTLEMENT IN EAST NORWAY: SUMMING UP

In terms of economic and social success, N. O. Nelson was in a class of his own among the second generation settlers from Hommedal Parish. He may well be regarded as an example how high it was possible to climb on the social and economic ladder, even though handicapped with almost no education, when equipped with a good portion of stamina and a flair for business. At the same time he had preserved traits of a benevolent and compassionate disposition, well in tune with his native Lutheran and pietistic background. He may have moved farther than the rest of his generation, but they shared a common characteristic of being in a process of moving ahead as their pioneer parents stepped back, realizing that their time and strength were dwindling. As the second generation took over, they were also involved in a transfer of land, position, and influence. The whole process of assimilation was given added weight by the common use of the English language, intermarriage, and the full acceptance, involvement, and exploitation of the American economic system.

Osul Nelson and his followers among the Norwegians in Missouri and those who came from Norway in the 1850s chose a new home in a rolling landscape of fertile prairie. They crossed the Missouri in search of better opportunities, sharing the heartfelt wish to provide for the next generation, and were able to use their first settlement as a stepping-stone towards richer and more secure lives. By stretching the lines of communication into the west,

⁷⁷ Fredrik Waage, “En merkelig nordmand i Amerika”, *Symra*, 1907: 78. My translation.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*: 81-82. My translation.

however, they contributed to dilute the Norwegian presence and made the continued success of a Norwegian colony in St. Joseph a precarious one, and at the same time relaxed their defences against foreign influence. The result was in fact that the diminished settlement in Buchanan County sped towards a rapid assimilation and “Americanization”, largely because of their lack of numerical strength. The settlers in Wolf River Township found themselves in a slightly more advantageous position. They were more numerous, perhaps more compact and vigorous, and were even able to relapse into the use of Norwegian in church for in short period in the 1870s. This was more or less the exception of the rule, and in all other spheres of life, the introduction and acceptance of the American way of life went its unperturbed course.

The development of both Norwegian colonies shows parallel characteristics to for instance German settlements in the early stages of European immigration. In the period 1780 - 1815, relatively few new German immigrants arrived in America, and the ones who arrived were not numerous enough to interrupt the ongoing process of general assimilation. Dinnerstein, Nichols, and Reimers point to the fact that they were not “many enough to sustain feelings of ethnic or national identity in those who arrived earlier.”⁷⁹ There was obviously a marked decline in the use of other languages than English, particularly since the common schools taught in English and also immigrant churches quickly adopted English both in ritual and sermons.⁸⁰ In all, immigrant communities seemed to be dependent upon a “critical mass”, a certain number of settlers, to be able to retain a national character or an ethnic identity.

In both colonies there was a willingness to cooperate with other settlers, in church, and in affairs of a more social and neighbourly character. Being a minority, there was of course also an element of mild coercion, or perhaps pragmatism in their ready acceptance of Americans, Germans, and Danes as partners and friends.

Osul Nelson’s inquisitive and open mind and his willingness to move into the nearly unknown world must have set an example for his fellow settlers. He had been the first pioneer to venture into the new land, had taken his claim in 1857, and probably used his experience from local politics in Norway to fill positions in school, church, and the legal system in Doniphan County. Others followed in his footsteps, and proved to be useful and conscientious contributors in the civic machinery. By such action, they of course moved ahead to submerge the national characteristics of the original Norwegian colony. It is therefore hardly a surprise

⁷⁹ Leonard Dinnerstein, Roger L. Nichols, David M. Reimers. *Natives and Strangers: A Multicultural History of Americans* (New York/ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003): 53.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

that N. O. Nelson delivered his speech to the descendants of the pioneers of 1846 in English, and wrote letters to his relations in Norway, also in English.

CHAPTER XI:

**HARD TIMES - CIVIL WAR
AND GUERRILLA WARFARE**

11.1 INTRODUCTON

The bloodshed of the Civil War did not affect Buchanan and Doniphan Counties directly in the sense that the two districts became scenes of major battles in the war. In Missouri, St. Joseph was well removed from decisive encounters between Union and Confederate armies; to the south of the town, in Westport, Union forces were victorious in 1864, whereas Confederate troops had the upper hand in Lexington and Lone Jack in 1861 and 1862. In all three cases, fighting took place some 40 to 60 miles away from the Norwegian settlements.¹ While only a few large-scale military operations occurred in Missouri, the complex mix of military units operating in the region made it a bloody battlefield for four long years, particularly in the south-eastern parts of the state. Northern sympathizers who were not in the regular Union army, formed The Missouri Enrolled Militia which engaged in constant warfare with the Missouri Confederate Militia. Federal troops, intent on preventing a Confederate invasion from the south, moved back and forth through the region. Confederate armies, determined to gain a foothold in Missouri, also marched through the state.² Guerrilla bands, some loyal to the North, others with allegiance to the South, engaged in some of the most widespread, longest-lived and most destructive guerrilla warfare of the Civil War. In any case, the war had the effect of brutalizing its participants. On the border between Missouri and Kansas, anti-slavery *jayhawkers* and pro-slavery “border ruffians” and *bushwhackers* would for a long period be involved in atrocities and acts of retaliation.

The Norwegians near Troy were somewhat removed from the clashes between armies. In fact, we have to look to the south of Fort Leavenworth to find Civil War battle sites: Lawrence (1863), Diamond Springs (1863), Shawneetown (1862), Olathe (1862), and Aubry (1862). Lawrence, the nearest of these sites, was situated about 50 miles south of Troy.³

The mere distance between such battle sites and the settlements did not make the Norwegian pioneers and their families immune to the horrors of war, untouched by the atrocities, and generally unaffected by the frightening events of the years 1861-1865. On the contrary, there is every reason to believe that the Norwegian settlers suffered as much as anybody, and bled in their hearts at the prospect of seeing their sons go to war on the Union

¹ *A State Divided: Missouri and the Civil War* (Leaflet, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, 2000).

² *A Guide to the Civil War Activities in the Southeast Missouri Region*, prepared by the Southeast Missouri Regional Planning & Economic Development Commission, Perryville, MO, 2001.

³ Roy Bird. *Civil War in Kansas* (Gretna, KS: Pelican Publishing Company, 2004): 16-17.

side. They were mostly silent about such experiences in their letters, but their actions leave little doubt that they stood firm with the Union.

*There has been a fierce battle down in Virginia, outside the Confederate capital Richmond, where many thousand soldiers are killed on both sides, but we do not know who has won. We hope that the Union shall prevail, nearly all Norwegians here in Kansas are in favour of the Union, with the exception of some very few. Many Norwegians serve as soldiers.*⁴

During four violent years the very young nation would ravage its landscape and its people, leaving nearly 650,000 dead in the battlefields. In 1861, the only serious engagements east of the Mississippi were fought at Fort Sumter and Bull Run. The ferocity of the fighting in those two sites shocked the Americans, and both sides seemed to pause after the initial clashes. In Missouri, small armies sought control of this slave state which had not seceded, and in a short-term perspective, the Confederates seemed to have the upper hand after victories at Wilson's Creek and Lexington. For most Americans and the rest of the world, however, operations in Missouri and the far West attracted little attention. The real war was taking place in the East, and for many that meant Virginia.⁵

In 1863, Abraham Lincoln's *Emancipation Proclamation* was made the law of the land. Before slaves could be freed, however, his armies would have to win decisive victories, and with Robert E. Lee opposing the Union armies, victory seemed elusive for the North. By 1864, the territories west of the Mississippi had become isolated from the rest of the Confederacy, and the successes of Grant and Sherman dimmed any Southern hope for victory. One year later, Confederate territory was largely overrun, and whole states had been devoured by Union armies. The war was lost, and soldiers and government ministers alike returned home to make their separate peace with victorious Yankees.

11.2 **BLEEDING KANSAS**

The United States Civil War began formally on April 12, 1861, when Confederate forces attacked Fort Sumter. There is, however, good reason to maintain that many residents in Missouri and Kansas had war-like experiences as early as 1854 when the Kansas-Nebraska Act was passed. This act allowed for the creation of the Territory of Kansas out of the huge

⁴ Nels Guttormsen Thompson, 1862. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 16.

⁵ William C. Davis. *The Civil War in Photographs* (Virginia Center for Civil War Studies, VA: Carlton Books, 2002): 13.

Nebraska Territory, and repealed a section of the Missouri Compromise which kept slavery from expanding north of the 36° 30' line.

The Missouri Compromise of 1820 had a significant impact on Missouri's northwest settlement patterns. Missouri's slave state status attracted a higher number of southern pioneers than would have otherwise been expected. These early settlers brought with them their entire cultural-economic system, basically the production of hemp and cotton with slave labour. It must be said, however, that Buchanan County was relatively little affected by this kind of agriculture.⁶ Among the Norwegians, only Peder Nelson may with certainty be classified as a slave owner. Also among the many Germans in the state, slaver ownership was rather rare. H. Jason Combs would go as far as to advocate the view that "those areas settled primarily by Upper Southerners possessed the greatest number of slaves and produced the most hemp and tobacco. The findings demonstrate that by 1850 the Upper South's slave culture had been transplanted to northwest Missouri's Platte region."⁷ Evidently, Buchanan County stood somewhat apart in this development, and the Lutherans of both German and Norwegian descent generally took a firm stand against the use of slave labour on their farms.⁸

When President Franklin Pierce signed the act organizing the Kansas and Nebraska Territories and repealing the Missouri Compromise, the right to determine the question of slavery was left with the states themselves. Passionate supporters of both sides began pouring into Kansas hoping to tip the balance in their own favour. During the elections in 1854 and 1855, abuses and disruptions were severe and numerous. Hordes of pro-slavery Missourians crossed the border, and posing as Kansans they destroyed ballot boxes, beat up officials, and turned the elections into a violent farce.⁹ Scuffles were all too common, and both sides supplied their supporters with weapons and ammunition. This was the beginning of what has been termed *Bleeding Kansas*.¹⁰

The violent events in Kansas reached the ears of Congress in Washington. A special committee was appointed, and the report presented in 1856 left little doubt that the elections

⁶ When the war broke out, Buchanan County had 2,000 slaves. Chris L. Rutt. *History of Buchanan County and the City of St. Joseph and Representative Citizens*: 256.

⁷ H. Jason Combs. "The South's Slave Culture Transplanted to the Western Frontier" *The Professional Geographer* 56 (2004): 361-371. <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs> (Accessed November 14, 2007).

⁸ Kamphoefner, op. cit.: 116.

⁹ Harrison Anthony Trexler. *Slavery in Missouri, 1804-1865* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1914): 195. <http://www.dinsdoc.com/trexler-1-6.htm> (Accessed November 15, 2007).

¹⁰ *The Troubles in Kansas – 1856 Report*: 1. <http://www.skyways.lib.ks.us/genweb/archives/troubles.html> (Accessed November 12, 2007).

in 1854 and 1855 were smeared by many instances of “rampant fraud”.¹¹ In 1858 Kansas grew less bloody, and the state got its own constitution one year later. There was jubilation in Kansas when President Buchanan signed the statehood bill in 1861.

When the war broke out, Southern sympathizers fled to Missouri and Arkansas, and *jayhawkers* resorted to irregular tactics to take revenge on the despised Missourians: burning, plunder, and murder became the order of the day. In turn, such tactics inspired savage retaliation by Missourians along the border. The result was that farms and communities on either side of the Missouri River were left in smouldering ruin.

In the first year of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln asked for 16,600 volunteers from Kansas. At that time there were only about 30,000 men of military age in the state. Nevertheless, more than 20,000 answered the call. Close to 8,500 of them became casualties of war. Also noteworthy is the relatively large number of African-Americans who served on the Union side. Officially there were only 300 black males in Kansas, but more than 2,000 Blacks volunteered for service. Many of these were obviously ex-slaves recruited in Missouri.¹²

Army records show that a number of young men from the two Norwegian settlements signed up for duty with the Union Army.¹³ There are no records of similar service with the Confederate Army.¹⁴

11.3 SOLDIERS IN THE WAR

The following young men from the settlements in Doniphan and Buchanan Counties volunteered for duty on the Union side:

- **Clem Clemetsen** (Ole Clemmetsen Solberg’s son); immigrated to Missouri 1849; a private with the 10th Regiment Kansas Voluntary Infantry, company F.
- **Tyra (Terje) Nelson** (Osul Nelson’s son); immigrated to Missouri 1847; a corporal with the 13th Regiment Kansas Voluntary Infantry, company C.
- **Anders Osuldsen Anderson** (Osul Andersen Løvåsen’s son); immigrated to Missouri 1847; a sergeant with the 8th Regiment Kansas Voluntary Infantry, company G. Enlisted in October, 1861, mustered out of service in October, 1864. Did duty in Wyoming Territory, Tennessee,

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Roy Bird. *Civil War in Kansas* (Gretna, KS: Pelican Publishing Company, 2004): 13.

¹³ *Missouri State Archives’ Soldiers Database: War of 1812-World War I*. www.sos.mo.gov/archives/soldiers/ (Accessed September 4, 2007), and *Records of Soldiers in the Civil War*, Troy Library, Troy, KS.

¹⁴ It is interesting to note that at least seven persons from the settlement founded by Johan R. Reiersen in Texas joined the Confederate Army: Johan Grøgaard, Hans Jensen Møglebustad, Ole Olsen Ramse, Hans Bentsen, Peder Olsen Songe, Simon Aanonsen, Carl Reiersen. Torbjørn Greipsland. “Borgerkrigssoldater fra Aust-Agder må ikke glemmes!” *Agderposten*, May 10, 2007.

Kentucky, Indiana, Maryland, and Virginia. “Shared in all the dangers and hardships of his command – from the effects of which he suffers today.”¹⁵

- **Nels (Niels) Osuldsen Anderson** (Osul Andersen Løvåsen’s son); immigrated to Missouri 1847; a private with the 8th Regiment Kansas Voluntary Infantry, company G. Was in the Union Army from 1861-1864. “Took part in the battles of Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, and a number of smaller engagements. He was wounded in the shoulder at the battle of Chickamauga.”¹⁶

- **Peder Osuldsen Anderson** (Osul Andersen Løvåsen’s son); immigrated to Missouri 1847; a private with the 10th Regiment Kansas Voluntary Infantry.

In addition to these five young men, a number of other Norwegian soldiers are mentioned in letters and other unofficial sources, but their participation is not confirmed in official records. One might guess that they actually served for a short period, or had expressed an intention to do so:

- **John (Johannes) Hoverson** (Lars Haaversen Stensvand’s son); immigrated to Missouri 1847; a corporal with the 25th Regiment Missouri Militia.

- **Nels Peter Nelson** (Peder Kalvehaven Nelson’s son); immigrated to Missouri 1847; a private with the 39th Regiment Missouri Militia, company A.

- **Helmer (Hjalmar) Hoverson** (Astri Lunden Østerhus’ son); immigrated to Missouri 1847.

- **Nels Olaus Nelson** (Anders Holte Nelson’s son); immigrated to Missouri 1847.

- **Thomas (Guttorm) Guttormsen** (Gunder Guttormsen Steine’s son); immigrated to Missouri 1850.

- **Nels (Niels) Guttormsen** (Gunder Guttormsen Steine’s son); immigrated to Missouri 1850.

- **Gunder Osuldsen Anderson** (Osul Andersen Løvåsen’s son); immigrated to Missouri 1847.

Details are not preserved to tell in detail the war experiences of the men mentioned above. Only two of the regiments are recorded to have taken part in actual fighting; others, like the 13th Kansas Voluntary, probably served solely on provost and patrol duties in Nebraska and Arkansas.

¹⁵ William G. Cutler. *History of the State of Kansas, part 4, Doniphan County, Biographical Sketches*. www.kanecoll.org/books/cutler/doniphan/doniphan-co-p4.html (Accessed November 20, 2007).

¹⁶ Ibid.

On the other hand, the 10th and 8th Regiments took part in bloody battles, where the young soldiers went through baptisms of fire. The first engagement that befell the 10th Regiment, took place in 1862, when Kansas was desperate to send thousands of Indian refugees back to Indian Territory. Two Indian Regiments were mustered, and as they were joined by parts of five whole regiments, Confederate forces in the area had reason to believe that a Federal invasion of the Indian Territory was imminent. The white regiments congregated at Fort Scott, and hearing of a rebel camp at Cowskin Prairie, they attacked the secessionists on the Missouri-Arkansas border. Only two companies from the 10th Regiment took part in the fighting, and it is most uncertain if any of the Norwegians from Doniphan County fought in this fairly modest skirmish.¹⁷

Later on in 1862, the 10th Regiment saw action at Newtonia, Missouri. Several of the key commanders were involved: on the Union side, General Blunt, and on the Confederate side, Colonel Jo Shelby, Douglas Cooper – and William Quantrill. The Kansans attacked the strong Confederate positions behind stone walls, and sent the entrenched enemy fleeing in all directions. In subsequent actions, the 10th Regiment was part of Blunt's army in a bloody encounter with General Marmaduke at Cane Hill, Missouri.¹⁸

After this period of almost continuous fighting, the 10th Regiment was pulled back from the actual war theatre, and served on provost duty in Tennessee and Nebraska during 1864-65.¹⁹

For the 8th Regiment, however, participation in the war in some cases turned into savage encounters with the enemy. The regiment spent months in Tennessee in 1863, mostly engaged in provost duties. In June, they moved to join the Union Army under General Rosencrans in a drive to take Chattanooga. The 8th fought at Shelbyville, then marched to Winchester on the Tennessee River. In the middle of September they engaged in battle at Chickamauga, fighting side by side with Norwegians in Colonel Hans Heg's 15th Wisconsin.²⁰ Casualties were heavy, and Colonel Heg was killed in action. Later on, the Colonel's death would be interpreted as a sacrifice to the common cause, "dulce et decorum est pro patria mori".²¹

¹⁷ Bird. *Civil War in Kansas*: 61-63.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*: 76.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*: 120. Also: *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 16.

²⁰ *Ibid.*: 96.

²¹ Orm Øverland. *Immigrant Minds, American Identities: Making the United States Home, 1870-1930* (Urbana and Chicago, ILL: University of Illinois Press, 2000): 172. Øverland has shown how the Civil War experiences were used to strengthen "ethnic self-confidence" and "convince Anglo-America that Norwegian Americans should be accepted as equals."

Along the banks of the Chickamauga Creek elements of the two armies battled each other. On the second day, General Longstreet's troops came onto the field to be ordered into an attack on the Union forces just as a gap opened in the Union lines, and the Confederates poured through, cutting Rosencrans's army in two, and sending the better part of the Union army in retreat. It was the most complete victory achieved by any Southern army in the entire war.²²

The 8th Regiment had more than 400 men from Kansas involved in the battle. Thirty of these were killed in battle, another 167 were wounded, and 25 soldiers were missing or captured.²³ Among these casualties was Nels Osuldsen Anderson who was wounded in his shoulder. His brother Anders was not among the dead or wounded, but all the same suffered after the war from the experiences the war had brought upon him.

When the war came to its end in 1865, the Kansas regiments were either mustered out or returned to their home state. The Indian Wars on the plains would continue for more than a decade, and some of the former border guerrillas like Frank and Jessie James and the Younger brothers would continue their actions. Eventually they too were brought under control, and the settlements in Kansas resumed their peaceful existence and their continued spread towards the west.

11.4 *A STATE DIVIDED*

Some time in the 1850s, Augustus Weddle, alias Claussen, had sold his property, and left his Norwegian friends in St. Joseph. He had followed his son to California, and had found work as a translator and teacher in San Francisco. In 1863 he wrote to Peder Nelson, expressing his contentment at the news that his son Frederik had married Peder Nelson's daughter Maren Christine a year earlier. There is also in his polite letter a glimpse into the worries and troubles which must have plagued the Norwegian settlers in times of war:

*I have not received any answer from either him or you, so I assume that the letter has not come to your attention, since I am fully convinced that neither you nor Frederik would have neglected to write to me if my letters had come to your attention. Times in Missouri are scarcely such that one can even call them tolerable, are they? It is a sad fate, which it is vain to sigh over, and when and how will they be better? Scarcely in your or my lifetime.*²⁴

²² Davis, *The Civil War in Photographs*: 117.

²³ Bird, op. cit.: 97.

²⁴ Augustus Vedel (Weddle), 1863. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 21, Appendix B.

Details about the atrocities of war do not abound in the preserved letters from the settlers. This may of course be a mere coincidence since the number of letters preserved is so small, but one might suggest that the very fact that a bloody civil war was fought at their doorstep was an event that the farmers in Buchanan and Doniphan Counties in general were not proud or eager to relate to their relatives in Norway. There are some few exceptions to this picture, but unfortunately the experiences of Sergeant Anders Osulsen Anderson are tucked behind minute descriptions of provisions and clothing.²⁵ He is, however, aware of the tidings of war:

As far as I know, there are over a million men in the United States' service now. In the part of the country which Reiersen calls the Mississippi Valley, the United States now has a force of three hundred and fifty thousand men. And it is not possible that there are as many rebels as one hundred and fifty thousand in the same district. The rest of both armies are in the eastern states. It is certainly an affair of importance. ... I have not much apart from warlike events to write about. I have been in service since October 2, 1861, so I know little about other things than episodes from the war. Our company has been in Nebraska for 8 months. We came back this winter, and made our way to our home where we stopped for a whole week, and I do not expect to return home soon, unless the war comes to a quick end.

In his next letter to relatives in Norway, he continues his detailed litany of provisions and supplies, and only leaves one sentence to hint at the hardships of warfare: "For my part, my health has suffered a lot."²⁶

With the start of the Civil War in 1861, Missouri increasingly found itself a divided state in a divided nation. Slavery was of less economic importance in Missouri than in other slave states, but Missouri's population was predominantly of southern stock and many sympathized with the cause of the Confederacy. In 1860, slaves constituted less than 10% of the population, and out of Missouri's 1.2 million citizens, fewer than 25,000 were slaveholders. In Paul C. Nagel's view, "slavery was not a compelling force in the minds of most Missourians in 1860."²⁷ There were, however, also a large and growing number of

²⁵ Anders Osulsen Anderson, 1862-64. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 9.

²⁶ Anders Osulsen Anderson, 1866. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 10.

²⁷ Paul C. Nagel. *Missouri: A History*: 128.

German immigrants, primarily in St. Louis, who tended to be strongly anti-slavery and pro-Union. The small groups of Norwegian settlers in St. Joseph were predominantly of the same opinion. Missouri itself was of vital importance to both the Union and the Confederacy. The state's substantial pool of manpower, its strategic geographic location on the great rivers and railways, its resources, and its wealth were sorely needed by both sides in the conflict.

The Civil War in Missouri took in three distinct phases.²⁸ When the war began, leading citizens sympathetic to the Confederacy and those siding with the Union quickly organized militias in an effort to gain the upper hand for their sides. An attack on a Union home guard regiment in St. Louis in 1861 was soon followed by the federal occupation of Jefferson City. They drove out the Governor and the Legislature, and installed a provisional pro-Union government. While a series of smaller engagements were fought, the remnants of the Legislature met in Neosho and voted to secede. The act was recognized by the Confederate government and Missouri was admitted to the Confederacy. Early in 1862, however, the pro-Confederate Missouri State Guard led by General Sterling Price, the former Governor, was driven from the state after defeat at Pea Ridge.

As the military was moved south for the next two years, Missouri, instead of finding itself at peace, became embroiled in a war more vengeful and vicious than before, a guerrilla war of revenge. The belief by the predominantly Northern forces policing Missouri that its citizens were disloyal secessionists led to harsh and often vindictive exercises of authority. This inflamed many Missouri natives, some of whom were stirred to open rebellion. Guerrilla bands led by men such as William Quantrill and "Bloody Bill" Anderson spread blood and terror across central and western Missouri, and kept Union forces off balance for much of the war.

The third and final phase of the war in Missouri began when General Sterling Price, hoping to regain control over the state, crossed into Missouri from Arkansas in September 1864. This was to be a final and climatic sweep across the state. After charges at Pilot Knob, Jefferson City, Boonville, and Lexington, a decisive battle was fought near Kansas City. Nearly 30,000 Union and Confederate troops clashed at Westport, and the Southern army was forced into a disorganized retreat. Price was pushed into Arkansas, ending the last major Confederate army action in Missouri.

Many Missouri soldiers never came home. They died of wounds, fever, dysentery, measles, and mumps. The war claimed 14,000 in Union blue between 1861 and 1865.

²⁸ The following paragraphs are largely based upon information from Paul C. Nagel. *Missouri: A History*: 120-143, and Roy Bird. *Civil War in Kansas*: 113-147.

Confederate dead were never accurately counted, but of 5,000 men who formed the 1st and 2nd Missouri Confederate Brigades at the battle of Pea Ridge in 1862, only 800 survived the war.²⁹

The involvement of St. Joseph and Buchanan County in the war or the border clashes was not great. This was most likely due to the fact that the Missouri River proved to be an excellent barrier. It could and did freeze solid in the winter, and could then be forded on foot or horseback, but it was extremely dangerous, and was usually only crossed by escaping slaves, willing to risk everything for freedom. The mere rumour or threat of attack was, however, enough to sow terror in the hearts of the people on both sides of the river.

Information about the Norwegians in Buchanan and Doniphan Counties in this period is scarce. One must assume that they felt the same fear and anxiety, experienced the same harassments as did everybody else in the region, and the little incidents related in their letters are scraps of a larger picture of unsettling affairs they heard about or saw for themselves during those hard years.

In 1862, Niels Guttormsen wrote home to his relatives:

*We live mostly calmly here these days, though we have had some few robber gangs and horse thieves in the vicinity here in Kansas. They have paid a visit to two Norwegians, namely one Kristen Terkelsen, where they stole two mules, and one horse from Osul Enge's son-in-law Lars Nielsen Haabesland.*³⁰

Information about the effects of the war on St. Joseph and its vicinity was scanty until Preston Filbert published his book on events between the late 1850s and the end of the Civil War.³¹ The most dramatic border incident involving St. Joseph occurred in 1859. John Doy, a doctor in Platte County, was arrested and charged with stealing slaves. He was convicted in the Buchanan County Courthouse, but shortly afterwards a group of men from Kansas arrived at the jail, posing as a posse turning in a horse thief. Once inside the jail, they imprisoned the jailer and freed Dr. Doy escaping back into Kansas territory before anyone in St. Joseph knew what had happened. Citizens were outraged, and somewhat of a panic ensued as rumours flew that John Brown himself had been involved in the raid. What was not known at the time was

²⁹ *A State Divided: Missouri and the Civil War* (leaflet prepared by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Jefferson City, MO, 2000).

³⁰ Nels (Guttormsen) Thompson, 1862. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 16.

³¹ Preston Filbert. *The Half Not Told: The Civil War in a Frontier Town* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2001). The following details about life in St. Joseph during the war years are taken from this work.

that John Brown was back east, planning a raid on Harper's Ferry. The confusion was most likely due to the fact that the poor jailer was also named John Brown.

Matters eventually calmed down, and the town returned to normal routines. It was decided to keep things as neutral as possible. Even in the election of 1860, compromise candidates Stephen Douglas and John Bell received the most votes, while the "radical" candidates Abraham Lincoln and John Breckinridge did poorly.

Shortly after the fall of Fort Sumter, southern sympathizers raided the Federal arsenals in Missouri, stealing weapons and ammunition. Many of such items were brought to St. Joseph and locked up in cellars for later use. In general, Unionists in the town felt that they did not get the support they deserved from the Federal Government. After several incidents, mostly without bloodshed, the Second Iowa Infantry marched into town, and set about to protect the railroad connecting Hannibal and St. Joseph.

In July 1861, the Second Iowa was ordered to St. Louis, leaving only a few Union troops in town. Rebel camps began to spring up everywhere, so many in fact that the Union Commander for Missouri, John C. Fremont, declared Missouri to be under martial law. Men carrying weapons without authority were to be court-martialled or shot. Slaves belonging to people found to be disloyal to the Union were to be freed. Town authorities still tried to maintain a cool and passive attitude, and for a while commanders on both sides agreed to leave the town alone.

Matters came to a climax in August, when the last of the Union troops were ordered to march towards Lexington to head off General Sterling Price and his army. Confederate troops took the occasion to capture St. Joseph. Since there were no longer Union troops in town, many Unionists crossed over to Elwood, taking with them as much of their own property as they could. Merchants with Southern sympathies turned over their goods to the Confederates. Soon general looting began, and reports estimated that the Confederates loaded approximately 25 wagons of clothing, groceries, hardware, and boots, and took every weapon and any horse which was available.

In September the situation got worse when the train crossing the Little Platte River was sabotaged and crashed into the river. The train carried 100 passengers, and many of these were killed, including soldiers from Fort Leavenworth.³²

³² "Terrible Railroad Catastrophe – Diabolical Rebel Outrage on the Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad", *New York Herald*, September 7, 1861.

About one week after the disaster, about 1,100 soldiers from the 16th Illinois were dispatched to St. Joseph, which was still under Confederate control. The Confederates realized that their time was up, and headed south to join Sterling Price at Lexington. The men of the 16th Illinois already had a reputation for being drunk and disorderly, prone to looting, and generally bad behaviour. Everywhere they went in northwest Missouri they just missed the Confederates, but stayed in the area for looting. When they returned to St. Joseph under the command of Colonel Robert Smith, they were ordered to “police” the countryside, that is, they were free to go on wholesale looting. On September 21, *The New York Tribune* printed an eyewitness report: “Between the Secessionist thieves and the Jay-hawkers, this town was nearly stripped of everything, and today the city is a solitude. The town is ruined for the present.”

At Christmas 1861, a young soldier from Illinois wrote to his sister and described some of the happenings in St. Joseph:

In this place yesterday there was a Secessionist Shot at Hank and Missed him. The Ball went through his Jacket collar he not more Than shot till his guts were hanging on the ground fore the instant he fired Hank yanked him by the collar and cut him half open. The man died this morning and last night I got in a row and Cut a man's head half off he is at the hospital his head was cut till you could see his Brains. Ther is a man or to killed here every day.³³

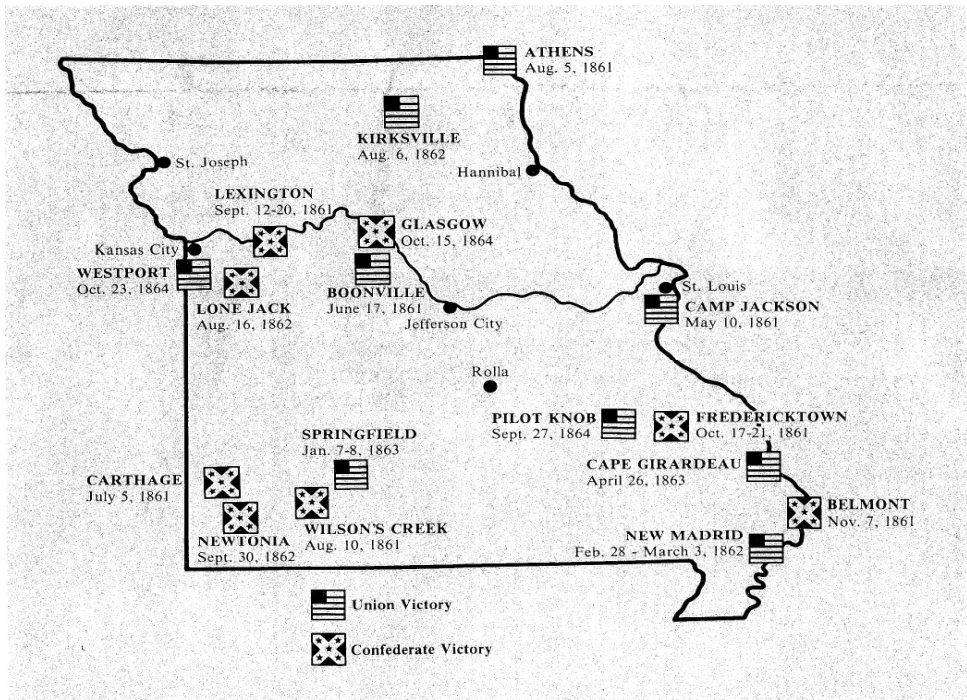
By 1863, as far as the Army was concerned, St. Joseph was no longer a centre for hot-headed secessionists. However, this was not necessarily true. The local Union commanders in North-West Missouri knew the real conditions. Men were being murdered for even the appearance of southern sympathies, and guerrilla activities were increasing. In August 1863, William Quantrill and his raiders attacked Lawrence, Kansas. John Bassett, provost marshal for North-West Missouri District, believed that the original target was St. Joseph, an unlikely surmise, and of course fear and anxiety spread in the town.

In the winter of 1864, St. Joseph was unknowingly linked to a man whose name would soon after appear in newspapers nationwide. He was an actor, and while snowbound in St. Joseph he was asked to perform a selection of recitations in the local theatre. Although the theatre was cold, the audience was packed, listening to Shakespeare's texts and *The Charge of*

³³ Letter from J. W. Reese to Henrietta Reese, December 25, 1861. Collection of St. Joseph Museum, Inc., St. Joseph, MO. Printed by courtesy of the museum.

the Light Brigade by Tennyson. John Wilkes Booth left the next morning by sleigh. In a short time he would be known as the assassin of Abraham Lincoln.

Based on official records and reports of a more personal and private character, it is likely that as many as 12 of the young men in the two small Norwegian colonies in Buchanan and Doniphan Counties answered the call to join the Union forces. At the same time, there is no indication that young men from the “Landvik-group” took part with the Confederate Army. Their loyalty was with the North and the Yankee way of life, and if Peder Nelson, the slave owner held Southern sympathies more sincere than the mere adherence to an economic system, he must have held a solitary view. Twenty years after they had reached the Promised Land, the sons of the first generation of pioneers had proved their worth, had joined forces with the side which was closest to their ancestral hopes, ideals, and ambitions, and by their willingness to give their lives for their new country, had finished a process of assimilation and declared themselves true citizens of the United States.



Important battles and skirmishes in Missouri (Civil War). Source: *Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Division of State Parks*, Jefferson City (08/11/00).

11.5 A NORWEGIAN SLAVE-OWNER

Peder Nelson does not appear in any official registration as a slave owner.³⁴ In his letter from 1857, however, he was very explicit about his use of slaves: “I have bought 3 black slaves, and paid 3,500 dollars for them, and I need another 3 to manage what I have ploughed as long as I am growing hemp, so you might say manpower is expensive.”³⁵ He is also mentioned in this capacity in other letters, in works on Norwegian emigration,³⁶ and there is of course family legend and the family graveyard with the graves of two of the slaves. Among papers left by the late Nora C. Nelson, a document from the Civil War adds proof that Peder Nelson was the owner of at least two Afro-American slaves. On December 5, 1861, the Provost Marshal in St. Joseph issued a permission in which Peder Nelson is allowed “to pass beyond the limits of the City of St. Joseph with two negro slaves, to go to his home in the country.”³⁷ It seems therefore quite safe to assume that he might have been the owner of as many as six or eight African-American slaves.

Niels Guttormsen Thompson offers a short glimpse of the slave owner in one of his letters:

*We have had some few robber gangs and horse thieves in the vicinity. ... They have been in Missouri at Peder Nielsen Dolholt's place, I presume you know he is a slave owner. He lost 6 slaves and 3 mules, worth 5-6,000 dollars, but now we hear that a woman with 2 children have been returned to him.*³⁸

It is somewhat unclear how many slaves Peder Nelson actually had. Their number varies from three to eight in various sources. Family stories tell that Karen Nelson had a firm hand on domestic affairs. She took her precautions, and personally prepared all meals in the family without the assistance of the slaves. Her care also extended to the well-being of the slaves. She guarded their health, and made clothes for them. There is also a story that she taught them some Norwegian words. After the emancipation, an old ex-slave had a little cabin by the road. Every time some of the Norwegian settlers came by, family legend claims they were greeted in Norwegian: “God dag, god dag. Takk for sist!”

³⁴ Searches for his name in the so-called *Black Archives*, St. Joseph Museum Inc. have proved negative. Ordinary Census Returns for Buchanan County are also without mention of him as a slave owner.

³⁵ Peder Nelson, 1857. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 7.

³⁶ Ulvestad. *Nordmændene i Amerika*: 197. “He had a lot of land, kept many slaves, and was very wealthy, but during the Civil War the slaves ran away from him.” My translation.

³⁷ By courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO.

³⁸ Niels Guttormsen Thompson, 1862. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 16.

The lack of labour and high wages in agriculture made times difficult both before and during the war. Peder Nelson may have been especially exposed to these problems, since he was the owner 800 acres, and relied rather heavily on the production of hemp. The *Agricultural Schedules* for 1850 show that he produced five tons of dew-rotted hemp, and was a major producer together with Osul Nelson who harvested ten tons. It should be noted, however, that Osul Nelson did not resort to the use of slaves, demonstrating that he managed well without slaves, although his production of hemp was twice as big. Peder Nelson may have argued that his large property coupled with hemp as a staple crop, demanded an intensive use of manpower, and he probably had enough money to engage in this type of investment in labour. Few others – if any – among the Norwegian settlers were in a position to be able to pay \$3,500 for three slaves. The market price for an adult, male slave in the period would be as high as \$1,200-1,400.³⁹ As far as hard labour was concerned, the slaves were mainly used in breaking hemp. It was their task to break at least one hundred pounds a day, and they were often given a bonus of one cent per pound of hemp broken in excess. Some slaves reportedly managed more than 200 pounds a day, and in a few cases 300 pounds.⁴⁰ Osul Nelson wrote in a letter that his son Terje (Tyra) broke “more than 100 pounds a day on his best days last winter, and he is just a little boy. I am not a hemp breaker myself.”⁴¹

The question arises, however, if Peder Nelson’s use of slaves was simply a sort of a pragmatic acceptance of a seemingly sensible economic system, adapted to a specific geographic location, or on a deeper level, an expression of sympathies with the Southern way of life.

In Missouri the slaves were in general used to do farm or domestic work, rather than employed in producing staple crops like hemp and cotton. In general it was a state of small slaveholdings. In north-western counties, cotton and tobacco were hardly grown, and it was comparatively rare in Missouri to see gangs of slaves driven by a white overseer in the manner of Southern plantations. As mentioned, hemp was the only produce which required what might be termed hard labour. No machinery ever substituted manual labour in breaking hemp, and with a lack of white labour, there was consequently a demand for slave labour. By 1870, the market for hemp dropped as the South began using iron hoops for baling cotton.

³⁹ Trexler, op. cit., Chapter I: 12, 18.

⁴⁰ Ibid.: 13.

⁴¹ Osul Nelson, 1854. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 2.

The *Tax Book* for Buchanan County in 1856 recorded that there were 1,534 slaves distributed among 425 owners, in other words, 3.6 slaves per master.⁴² In this county, the number of slaves was low compared to the rest of the state, and it was quite unknown to keep many slaves on a farm. If Peder Nelson had eight slaves, he was in fact a “major” slave owner in his county.

The smaller towns in Missouri seem to have been regularly visited by itinerant buyers and sellers of slaves. In addition, the larger towns and cities had permanent dealers. There was at least one such permanent firm in St. Joseph in 1856.⁴³ John Doy, the abolitionist who was imprisoned in St. Joseph for stealing slaves, asserted that many Negroes were transported to Bernard Lynch, Corbin Thompson, and other large buyers in St. Louis.⁴⁴ Although Peder Nelson stood apart from the other settlers of the “Landvik-group” in the question of slavery, he was on the other hand a respected and integrated citizen of the St. Joseph community. One may argue that he had become assimilated precisely because he was willing to discard the traditional Lutheran abhorrence at the institution of slavery, and let the prospect of financial gains have the last word. His stand on the slave question in all probability isolated him from the other Norwegians. The news that young men of the “Landvik-group” volunteered for duty with the Union Army, and the fact that his son Nels Peder joined the Missouri Militia and his son-in-law, Frederik Weddle, served as an officer with the government in Washington, must have distressed him, and his standpoint possibly contributed to the division of the Norwegian colony in St. Joseph.

It remains, however, uncertain how deep Peder Nelson’s attachment to Southern values went. No evidence which might document his deepest convictions has been preserved, and one may only assume that financial considerations played a bigger role than ideological convictions.⁴⁵ After all, Peder Nelson had on other occasions showed that he was a pragmatist in matters of for instance school and religion. To soften the picture of the pragmatic capitalist, there is of course the family story that his slaves were treated humanely, and that they even returned to their former owner voluntarily after they had run off with his mules and other

⁴² Trexler, op. cit.: Chapter I: 7.

⁴³ *St. Joseph Commercial Cycle*, August 15, 1856.

⁴⁴ Trexler, op. cit.: 31.

⁴⁵ It remains a disputed question whether the use of slaves in Missouri’s agricultural production was a sound economic investment and promoted economic development. The scarcity of white paid labour may have driven some farmers to buy slaves, and it might be argued that slavery declined because it did not pay. Even anti-slavery agitators held that tobacco and hemp could only be grown by means of slave labour, but were met with arguments that the use of slaves was a curse and hampered the economic development of the state. Trexler, op. cit.: 37.

items of his property, and spent the rest of their lives on the Nelson homestead, tilling the soil and making bricks for George Nelson's new house.

11.6 PROTESTANTS AND CAPITALISTS

In his famous work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), Max Weber observed "the fact that business leaders and owners of capital, as well as the higher grades of skilled labor, and even more the higher technically and commercially trained personnel of modern enterprises, are overwhelmingly Protestant."⁴⁶ In his investigation of the roots of ascetic Protestantism, Weber found that Calvinism, Pietism, Methodism, and Baptism all shared the common concept of religious grace "which mark[ed] off its possessor from the degradation of the flesh, from the world."⁴⁷ Essential to the so-called ascetic Protestantism was the doctrine of predestination which in its intense stages among for instance the Puritans, led to a gloomy outlook upon life, and an almost unprecedented inner loneliness for the individual. God had chosen a limited number of people, the Elect, for salvation, and life became in many ways a continuous search for signs of grace. Salvation through Church and the Sacraments had been eliminated, and the Puritans' repudiation of everything superstitious or magical led to its logical conclusion. Even at the grave, all ceremonies, songs, and rituals were rejected, so that no hint of the effect of sacramental powers should creep in. Everything connected to the flesh was corrupt and sinful, but by stages the outlook was accepted that worldly activities, e.g. labour, were permissible as long they were for the increase of the Glory of God, and the good of common man.

Weber would argue that Catholicism historically had been tolerant towards the acquisition of worldly gains and even closed its eyes at lavish expenditure. The hierarchical structure of the Church enhanced the struggle for positions and climbing, and the often-used earthly powers of forgiveness of sin, may have led many to conclude that the Catholic Church was in fact more predisposed towards capitalism than Protestantism. But Weber would argue that the opposite was the case. The presumed anti-capitalistic Puritan view that earthly acquisitiveness must be avoided was actually an impetus for that same acquisitiveness. In fact, the Puritans objected to the enjoyment of wealth because of its possible implications of idleness, relaxation, and the temptations of the flesh. Making money for the common good, or

⁴⁶ Max Weber. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by Talcott Parsons and Anthony Giddens (London/ Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1930).

<http://www.xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/WEBER/WeberCH1.html>

Chapter 1: 1. (Accessed December 2, 2007).

⁴⁷ Ibid.: Chapter 4:29.

in praise of God, was not objectionable. “For if that God, whose hand the Puritan sees in all occurrences, shows one of His elect a chance of profit, he must do it with a purpose. Hence the faithful Christian must follow the call by taking advantage of the opportunity.”⁴⁸

In Weber’s view, it was correct that the Protestant doctrines asked men to accept a humble station and concentrate on worldly tasks and duties without the possibility of upward movement, acquisitiveness, or expenditure. Protestant ethics stressed the absolutely essential feeling of obligation to one’s job, a calling. And it was exactly this that engendered the “work-and-save” ethic that gave rise to capitalism. Dedication to and pride in one’s job, Weber claimed, is inevitably a sound productive attitude. The Calvinist ethic of “godliness” through the humble dedication to one’s calling meant that economic productivity was higher in Protestant communities than in Catholic ones. The upward mobility which was possible in Catholic society implied that a lot of people found themselves in positions which they saw only as stations to higher and better jobs, thereby dedicating only a minimal attention to their tasks, either because they found it beneath their dignity, or not worth resigning to as their end in life. Consequently, Weber concluded, Catholic communities tended to be less productive.

The higher productivity of Protestants was coupled with higher thriftiness. The sinfulness of expenditure or display of lavish habits was a Protestant principle. The Catholic Church had been more prone to forgive such sins. The Protestant Church did not have these powers, and consequently the inducement to the faithful to stay modest in consumption was strong. Yet the higher productivity of the Protestant essentially meant that they earned more than the Catholic, and because they saved more, they accumulated wealth. In this way, Weber was able to conclude that the notion of “capitalist accumulation” had its source in Protestant ethic, basically through its insistence upon dedication to one’s calling and modesty in consumption.

Turning to America, Weber continued his chain of thoughts, and would maintain that capitalism remained far less developed in the Southern States, in spite of the fact that these states were founded by capitalists for business motives, while the New England colonies were “founded by preachers and seminary graduates with the help of small bourgeois craftsmen and yeomen, for religious reasons.”⁴⁹

Weber’s thesis has of course been much disputed since its publication in 1905. In this context, however, it makes excellent sense, and adds a possible added insight into the motives and attitudes of Peder Nelson, the slave owner. The question is really if Nelson chose to own

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*: Chapter 5: 4.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*: Chapter 2: 5.

slaves because he held it economically wise and in keeping with farming traditions in Buchanan County, or because there was an element of ideological sympathy with the South. Evidently, no hard evidence exists in this matter, and any attempt at conclusion must be based on suggestions and circumstantial evidence.

There is little doubt that Peder Nelson and his compatriots brought with them a solid ballast of Protestant ethics. They had all been reared in the Lutheran faith, and one might also point to the effects of Hans Nielsen Hauge's travels in Southern Norway, his religious struggle against the established church, and his deep dedication to his calling and work. In America, the influence exerted by Elling Eielsen, the vagrant preacher, also strengthened the impulses sown by Hauge in several immigrant settings.

What is more peculiar in the Norwegian settlements in Missouri, however, is the impact which descended on them through their contact with the Missouri Synod. As mentioned earlier, the teachings of that synod were largely influenced by German immigrants, not least from Westphalia, who were responsible for adding a clearly pious, or even ascetic Protestant stamp going back to the Reformation, on the workings of that religious body. When the Norwegians welcomed their first pastor in 1860, Laurentius Larsen was filling the position of Professor in Concordia College, and his status must have made it easy to convey pietistic ideas to the lost brethren on the frontier. Now, there was probably no great divide between the beliefs held by the "Landvik-group" and the teachings conveyed to them through Laurentius Larsen's work. They remained pious Christians, modest in behaviour and expenditure, and strong believers in God's infinite care. It seems certain, however, that the principle of predestination never struck root in the Norwegian colonies. Although Larsen admitted that he was more influenced by the Missouri Synod than he would have thought possible, he later moderated his viewpoints on religious issues.

Following Weber's ideas, there existed among the Norwegian settlers in Missouri and Kansas, a basis of pious Protestantism which would open the door for capitalism. In economic matters, there is every reason to believe that these settlers embraced rural capitalism as they encountered it in their settlements with little or no apprehension. On the contrary, the very experience of earning money, amassing wealth, and thereby securing their children and their future, was in keeping with the central goal of their exodus. In Peder Nelson's case, one might also add that he even before the departure from Norway, had proven to be a businessman, at ease in diverse economic enterprises, and so well-off that he brought a considerable sum of money with him to America.

On such a background it therefore seems reasonable to assume that Peder Nelson's involvement in slavery rested on a wish to make the most out of the economic system. There is in fact very little which points in the direction of ideological convictions, but one might of course criticize Nelson for being blind to human values. One should perhaps take into consideration his treatment of the slaves; they were obviously rather well cared for, and it is even revealing that they returned voluntarily to their former master after the emancipation, and found graves in the family cemetery. Such mitigating circumstances are worth noting, and are valuable in balancing the evaluation of Peder Nelson's actions and motives, but they hardly obliterate the very fact that he, as the only farmer in the Norwegian settlement, resorted to buying and exploiting slaves on his large farm for economic ends.

CHAPTER XII:

E PLURIBUS UNUM

12.1 NEW CITIZENS

On March 30, 1853, Peder Nelson appeared before the Circuit Court in Buchanan County “to take the oath to support the Constitution of the United States”, and “the oath of allegiance required by law”, and was then “duly admitted a Citizen of the United States.”¹ The other members of the “Landvik-group” followed his example, and in the 1860 and 1870 Census Returns for Buchanan and Doniphan Counties, all the grown men of Norwegian descent in the two settlements were without exception listed in the column “male citizen of U.S. of 21 years of age and upwards.”

They would all have to wait five years before they were granted their citizenship, but they seemed impatient and eager to obtain the document, and were quick to appear before the authorities. It was a highly symbolic and of course concrete act, signalling a deeply felt motivation and intention to become an integrated partner in the American experience. Their urge to become American citizens was coupled with a series of minor moves, repeating the confirmation of the act of burning their bridges. There was of course a continuous contact through letters with the old country, but none of the pioneers from the first two generations returned to Norway, except for some rare and short visits. In a larger perspective, during and after the waves of mass-emigration, as many as one quarter of the total number of migrants would return to their native country.

There are no records which show that the pioneers in any way upheld a chauvinistic attitude, or for instance celebrated the Norwegian Constitution Day on May 17, or founded ethnic societies like *bygdelag*. But then, of course, primary sources and records are somewhat scanty. It seems reasonable, however, to assume in the first place that a development of what Jon Gjerde has termed a “complimentary identity” or “multiple loyalties” probably played a lesser role in the small Missouri and Kansas settlements compared to other and larger Norwegian communities to the north.²

In both 1914 and 1925, major celebrations were staged in Minnesota, commemorating the Norwegian Constitution of 1814 and the ensuing freedom from Denmark, and the Centennial of the “sloopers” who arrived in New York in 1825. April R. Schultz has in particular made the 1925 celebrations in St. Paul and Minneapolis the subject of an

¹ Copy of microfilm of original document supplied by the *Northwest Missouri Genealogical Society*, 412 Felix St., St. Joseph, MO.

² Jon Gjerde. *The Minds of the West: Ethnocultural Evolution in the Rural Middle West, 1830-1917* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

interdisciplinary study of the relation between such pageants and ethnicity.³ In her view, Norwegian Americans used this occasion to invent and create a distinctive vision of their past. In doing this, they both accommodated and resisted the dominant Anglo-American interpretation of assimilation. Her viewpoints represent a new and challenging conception of the role of ethnicity in immigrant communities, but are also contested by scholars like Odd S. Lovoll who sees the celebration in 1925 as “the last rally – an ethnic counter-reaction.”⁴

About 75,000 spectators gathered to see the pageants in 1925: Vikings and pioneer immigrants, the heroic actions of Colonel Hans Heg in the Civil War, and examples of proud Norwegian initiatives in the history of the United States.⁵ Such a mass-gathering of Norwegian-Americans was of course unknown and impossible in the two small settlements in St. Joseph and East Norway. They came to America in the early period of settlement, they were very few, isolated from other Norwegian settlers, and when they did celebrate the Centennial of their own departure from Norway, it was done in a modest fashion with three generations present. It is true that words were uttered about a proud Norwegian history, but the key-note speech was held in English, and the main theme focused on the achievements of the settlers on American soil. It is perhaps noteworthy that the 1896 celebration came prior to the liberation from Sweden in 1905, and therefore lacked the background of rather bitter feelings connected to that union. Any note of nationalist or even chauvinistic attitudes would logically have been tied to the union with Denmark, and that union was in many respects characterized by peaceful relations and the tendency to regard the King in Copenhagen as the “Father”. Also, the lingering impact of the Civil War, romantic nationalism in Norway round the turn of the century, American nativism, and World War I, deepened the gap between the early and modest celebrations and the pageants in 1925.

April R. Schultz maintains that “[t]he larger lesson to be gained from the Centennial and the surrounding debates in the Norwegian-American community is that assimilation and Americanization were hotly contested.”⁶ It is not within the scope of this dissertation to consider the relevance of Schultz’ view in relation to the 1920s, but it is very problematic to find convincing evidence in the available material from Missouri and Kansas to support her position. The way the twin settlements developed, it seems fair to conclude that they moved forward in a “linear” fashion, and that assimilation came about “naturally” and perhaps

³ April R. Schultz. *Ethnicity on Parade: Inventing the Norwegian American Through Celebration* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994).

⁴ Odd S. Lovoll. *The Promise of America: A History of the Norwegian-American People* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 1984): 195-196. Quoted by Schultz, op. cit.: 16.

⁵ Schultz, op. cit.: 1, 51.

⁶ *Ibid.*: 12.

“inevitably”.⁷ This does not mean that the process of assimilation among the settlers in St. Joseph and East Norway took its course mindlessly and without any individual resistance. Certainly, there were differences in pace and intentions, and Schultz may be correct in arguing that “the immigrant world was not a replica of the culture they left behind, but a complex creation that had a great deal to do with the circumstances of migration and settlement.”⁸ For settlers in the 1920s as well as the 1840s, the process of migration carried with it a kind of “identity-making”.

On the basis of recent research on migration, however, one might be tempted to question the impression that assimilation among the Norwegians in Missouri and Kansas was an untroubled and quick process. Available sources indicate that the process was uncommonly rapid, but it might of course have been more complex and individual than scanty sources tell. We do know that the settlers co-operated closely in religious, educational, and social matters with German and Danish settlers, and alternative strategies of adaptation may have developed. German settlers would of course come to suffer from political world events, and German ethnicity would in the aftermath of two world wars undergo a total “submergence”.⁹ In the case of the Norwegian settlers, their situation was far more harmonious, although a number of Norwegian-Americans in the 1920s felt the urge to advocate the view that Norwegians were certainly “old stock”, and in fact made the best Americans. It is, however, important to underscore the fact that the immigrants in the 1840s, Germans and Norwegians alike, were not yet affected by later disastrous events and developments which questioned people’s loyalties and identities. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the fact that Germany and the United States had been enemies in two world wars, made assimilation difficult for many groups, and a lot of Germans must build “alternative identities”, and find their roots “beyond the level of the ethnic group.”¹⁰ In such a situation, immigrants might learn to “adopt a common ‘white’ racial identity ... and join an ‘imagined community’ of specifically white Americans.”¹¹ In the pioneer years, on the other hand, co-operation between Norwegian, German, and Danish settlers in Missouri and Kansas hardly developed into anything more than a pragmatic common market of reciprocal advantage. For the people of the “Landvik-group”, assimilation into the dominant American culture therefore seems to have been their

⁷ Ibid.: 13.

⁸ Ibid.: 19.

⁹ Russel A. Kazal. *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity* (Princeton, MA: Princeton University Press, 2004): 1.

¹⁰ Ibid.: 3.

¹¹ Ibid.

natural way. In addition, the short span of settlement and the lack of new immigrants after 1855 significantly reduced the possibilities of upholding their ethnic heritage.

By settling on the Frontier the peasants from Hommedal Parish became part of an early stage of the American Experience, “a journey not finished” to use Luther S. Luedtke’s words, “an ongoing process of uprooting, transplantation, adaptation, and renewal.”¹² They were not many, perhaps only an insignificant group in the continual gathering of races and peoples who sought a new home in America. Their eagerness to become citizens of the United States was logically founded. It was linked to their dreams of freedom and personal choice, and epitomized their idea of America as the land of new opportunity. In contrast to the customs of Europe, the American society acknowledged the right of the individual to choose his own citizenship and to change allegiance at will. When Peder Nelson took the oath in 1853 to support the Constitution and abjured his allegiance to the King in the home country, he accepted his citizenship as a personal obligation. Johan R. Reiersen, their pathfinder, had of course praised the freedom and the unfettered opportunities found in America, but had hardly indicated that the United States in essence was the ideal, perhaps even the embodiment of values, held high by the Enlightenment. It was a nation based upon an ideology, to use Arthur Mann’s words, “what Americans think is what Americans are.”¹³ Unlike European nations, the United States had not been founded on defined boundaries, a common religion, a long and cherished history, a homogeneous population descending from a common stock, or sharing an ancient folklore. By contrast, the United States promised to unite the foreign-born with the host people through a common citizenship, and extolling liberty, opportunity, religious freedom, representative government, property ownership, and a better future for everybody. They wanted to be a free people, and were in themselves a sufficient guarantee for a stable and accepted authority. In such a state there was no need for monarchy, nobility or an established church to uphold the functions of a nation.

For immigrants like Peder Nelson, it must have been a profound experience to take the oath of allegiance to the United States, and at the same time not be demanded to renounce their religion, or their language, or their customs, or their memories, or their contacts with the old world. They were, on the other hand, expected to join a process of acculturation, but it was a process with no set ending like full assimilation, and therefore open to ethnic

¹² Luther S. Luedtke, ed. *Making America: The Society & Culture of the United States* (Chapel Hill, NC/ London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992): 3.

¹³ Arthur Mann. “From Immigration to Acculturation” in Luedtke. *Making America*: 72.

preferences and characteristics while defending and “upholding the values of a common civic culture.”¹⁴

Their letters abound in descriptions of the natural wonders of America, and the pioneers also touch upon issues connected to personal freedom, equality, and individual responsibilities:

*[Here are] good laws in protection of freedom and rights. One hears little of summons and processes. If there is a judicial process once in a while, it is soon settled, one does not waste your time here, and one does not use so much money on public authorities as in Norway to get one's rights.*¹⁵

*Everyone here dresses like a gentleman, and one sees no difference between a farmer and a government official; they are all equal here, and a plain man's son is just as likely to be an official as the president's, if he has a clear head and by his virtues and learning makes himself deserving of that position. Class and birth do not count here.*¹⁶

The exodus from Hommedal Parish to America came at a time when gathering waves of immigrants from Europe reached the shores of the New World. In the 1840s, about two million crossed the Atlantic; the number increased by ½ million in the next decade, and immigrants by 1860 constituted about 10% of the total population. In the period from 1830-1860, immigrants from Germany and Ireland dominated the picture, and in the following two decades these two nationalities were joined by Englishmen and Scandinavians to increase the total five million immigrants before 1880.¹⁷ Other nationalities followed, and contributed to make diversity the core of the American experience. In fact, the United States has always been a society marked by ethnic and racial diversity. Americans seem to share the faith that “unity and diversity are not only mutually compatible, but supportive of liberty.”¹⁸

¹⁴ Arthur Mann, op. cit.: 80.

¹⁵ Osul Enge, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 1.

¹⁶ Peder Nelson, 1848. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 6.

¹⁷ Jon Gjerde, ed. *Major Problems in American Immigration and Ethnic History* (Boston/ New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1998): 96.

¹⁸ Arthur Mann, op. cit.: 80.

12.2 ACCULTURATION, ASSIMILATION, ETHNIC IDENTITY

Alfred Hirschmann's three key options of "exit, voice and loyalty" have been touched upon earlier.¹⁹ The very act of leaving Hommedal Parish in 1846 was then linked to the concept of "exit", but on arriving in Missouri, the immigrants were faced with the pressures of the "hegemonic cultural group" to use Thomas Hylland Eriksen's expression.²⁰ In one sense, they had used their "voice" to protest the doings of the disliked class of civil servants in Norway, but one should admit that they had been loyal and timid, rather than rebellious. Of course, their act of emigrating from Norway contains both kinds of protest, "exit" and "voice". On reaching the American shore, one highly theoretical option was to negotiate for limited autonomy. Such an idea probably never struck the Norwegian settlers in 1847, and would have proved close to impossible since Congress already in 1818 had established the principle that the Government would not assist any overseas group to found a homeland in America.²¹ More likely, the settlers of the "Landvik-group" came with every intention of becoming loyal citizens, and there is no reason to believe that they harboured any hopes for an isolated pocket of self-governing Norwegians.

The viable and realistic option left for them was to follow most immigrants on their way towards acculturation and possible assimilation. This was the common and loyal way, and carried with it the danger of minorities being obliterated as an ethnic group, that is, losing their identity, language, and cultural bearings under the pressure of Anglo-American hegemony. On the other hand, the late 1840s saw the resurgence of strong ethnic sentiments, not least among the Germans, who were quite unwilling to succumb to Anglo-American cultural dominance. In practical life, the result would often be a kind of reconciliation between the two opposing trends: ethnic identity in a nation-state.

In groping for an understanding of the concept of immigration we should take as our point of departure the diversity of the United States. It is a polyglot society, a nation of nations, and we need to be very much aware of the variety of immigrant experiences. Any immigrant settlement would therefore in a sense be a battleground for opposing trends and forces. It is improbable that a struggling settler had a clear picture of such opposing forces in his newly-founded life, but as students of migration we stand before the choice of perspective:

¹⁹ Alfred O. Hirschmann, *Exit, Voice, Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations and States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970). See *Introduction* (1.1).

²⁰ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, "Ethnicity and Nationalism: Definitions and Critical Reflections", Helena Lindholm, ed. *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Formation of Identity and Dynamics of Conflict in the 1990s* (Nordnes: Nordic Network of Ethnic Studies, 1993): 45.

²¹ Luther Luedtke, op. cit.: 77.

uprootedness or transplantation, ethnicity or assimilation. What is the correct perspective? Does it lie with Oscar Handlin's tragic view of alienated and uprooted South-European immigrants? Or should we follow John Bodnar's Marxist inclination and vote for his transplanted "children of capitalism"? Or is John Higham right in focusing on a more centralized society with ethnic groups co-existing under the umbrella of the American nation?

Or does Kathleen Neils Conzen come near the truth when she advocates the view that ethnicity was a social construction continually reinvented, and with a parallel development with Americans inventing a national identity? Finally, in a Scandinavian perspective, do the studies of Norwegian and Swedish settlements in the upper Middle West conducted by Jon Gjerde, Robert Ostergren, and Rasmus Sunde seem balanced in their grades of transplanted communities? The options are many, and perhaps there is no simple answer, only combinations of tentative approaches within a wide range of diverse and varied experiences of life in the New World, and the interplay between ethnicity, national unity, and immigrant identity.

As for the prospective farmers from Hommedal Parish, their arrival came at a time and in a context which resembles the situation other immigrants had met with at an earlier date in America, i.e. between 1780 and 1830. In that period the number of immigrants was too low to represent a threat to the ongoing process of assimilation to the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture. In other words, the newly arrived were too few to be able to sustain an ethnic or national identity in competition with the overwhelming majority of settlers who had arrived before them.²² It has been argued that Americans regarded themselves as a generous people, willing to share their "milk and honey" with less fortunate people from Europe. They expected, however, that the Europeans who arrived in the New World would relinquish their old ways and habits and willingly become acculturated to their new surroundings. Before that could happen, the immigrants were regarded as unfit for participation in American political and social life. The first sacrifice came quickly, native languages different from English disappeared with the second generation, and the common schools saw to it that children were instilled with the right attitudes and values to be accepted as Americans.²³

In the early period of settlement in the United States, the prevalent view was that America should remain a white, Protestant nation, largely built upon the English language and

²² Leonard Dinnerstein, Roger L. Nichols, David M. Reimers. *Natives and Strangers: A Multicultural History of Americans* (Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press, 2003): 53.

²³ *Ibid.*: 87.

English social organization. All newcomers were expected to bow to this idea, quickly assimilate, and accept that while they might be white Europeans, they were not to be equalled to the supreme Anglo-Saxons. Many ethnic groups would from the 1850s onwards feel compelled to resort to myths to demonstrate that their national past contained persuasive evidence of major contributions to the building of an American nation. For certain Norwegian milieus, the Vikings and their conquest of parts of Britain and France contained the seeds of both a future American democracy and a blood-relatedness between Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians. Some ethnic groups were even considered unfit for this process of assimilation, like the Afro-Americans and the Indians. In the 1830s, however, the influx of large groups of German immigrants challenged this idea of Anglo-American supremacy. The arguments for Anglo-American superiority were often generously coupled with the admission that Nordic cousins and other neighbouring nations in Northern Europe possessed many of the right qualities for Americanization, while other nations to the south and east were placed lower on a social ladder. At the bottom were of course Indians, Blacks, and Orientals. On such a sliding scale of acceptance and possibility, Norwegian immigrants were favourably placed near the top. The Norwegians' near-WASP qualities indicated little conflict and swift absorption of desired attitudes. Nevertheless, influential people like Rasmus B. Anderson would near the turn of the century assume a central position in the moves towards social and historical acceptance, and advocate chauvinistic viewpoints, claiming that Norwegians had every reason to regard themselves as equal to the envied Anglo-Saxons.²⁴ The Centennial in 1925 was constructed upon the organizers' contention that Norwegian Americans were "loyal citizens whose values were compatible with American ideals, safe, and conflict-free", although April R. Schultz demonstrates that the insistence upon the uniqueness of Norwegian immigrants counteracted the prevalent idea of assimilation.²⁵

In Kathleen Neils Conzen's opinion, German immigrants in America before 1830 discovered that the nation was kept together by political loyalties. It was a nation gathered around a creed, a community of belief, with a set of principles to hold the United States together. The result was that cultural differences were quite irrelevant and of little concern. The wish to be free and the belief in the institutions of a free nation was what mattered. By

²⁴ Orm Øverland, op. cit.: 6, 150. In Nora C. Nelson's papers, kept by Mort Nelson and Jane Nelson Thompson in St. Joseph, there is a tendency to cherish the mythical past of "our proud Viking forefathers", and she devoted a whole section of a paper to praise the exploits of Viking heroes. There seems to be little doubt that she was influenced by similar tendencies to that of Rasmus B. Anderson, viz. to secure Norwegians a place alongside with culturally dominant Anglo-Saxons and thereby gain recognition as equal partners in the American adventure.

²⁵ Schultz, op. cit.: 115, 126.

mid-century, however, the Germans and the Irish had introduced ideas that each immigrant group should contribute something of their own characteristic qualities to the common cause. They seemed quite determined to fight against any assimilation to what they considered an inferior culture.²⁶ Their “melting-pot” notion carried with it the duty for a group “to protect, cultivate, and promote its qualities long enough to enable them to be absorbed.”²⁷ In fact, already in 1827, Gottfried Duden had expressed his belief that European Germans might have a second home in America, founding cities as centres for German culture. (Surprisingly, he also mentioned the idea that one or two slaves could be bought at a low price to help German farmers in their pursuits.)²⁸

Mack Walker has even seen the German immigrants as radicals who attempted to conserve their old way of life. To him, the immigrants came to America less to build than to regain and preserve something old and nearly lost in their European homes. They crossed the seas, hoping to blow life into the old patterns and ways under more favourable economic circumstances. In the face of a rapidly changing homeland under the impact of spreading industrial capitalism, “they journeyed to another world to keep their homes.”²⁹

In general, three models are common to explain the development of the American society and the influx of immigration. First, Anglo-Saxon conformity is identified with the period of British colonial dominance, particularly in New England and the South. British social organization, tastes and systems of local government persisted well into the 19th century, and the dominance of English language and law prevail to this day. The eastern seaboard was probably closest linked to Anglo-Saxon conformity, and Frederick Jackson Turner for example focused his attention elsewhere, on the growth of the Western Frontier. On the frontier he found the true American character, marked by individualism, inventiveness, ambition, and fearlessness, and void of British conformity.

Second, the theory of the “melting pot” was originally attached to the Atlantic coastline and the rural midwest; it was an attractive ideal, but came under attack in the early 20th century, when the varied contributions of ethnic groups in America were highlighted. The

²⁶ Ibid.: 85.

²⁷ Kathleen Neils Conzen a.o. “The Invention of Ethnicity in the United States” Jon Gjerde, ed., *Major Problems in American Immigration and Ethnic History*: 27.

²⁸ Jon Gjerde. *Major Problems in American Immigration and Ethnic History*: 98-99.

²⁹ Mack Walker. *Germany and the Emigration, 1816-1885* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964): 69

maintenance of ethnic identities would in this view contribute enormously towards vitality and cultural pluralism, which is the third model.³⁰

The concept of “the melting pot” came close to the original ideals of the young nation. There was a strong belief among Americans in the 18th and early 19th century that a “new Adam” could be born out of the experiences in the New World. Crèvecoeur’s “new race of men” was seen as having diverse origins, but melted together they represented a new order of society. National characteristics would automatically disappear, and be replaced by other unifying sides of the American character. As mentioned, however, the insistence in mid-century upon the retention of national heritage meant a set-back for the idealistic view, and only at the turn of the century a growing acceptance of pluralism in the American society began to strike root.

In the 1960s, in the midst of ethnic revival, Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan in a classic study argued that the process of the melting pot did not take place. Rather than eradicating ethnic differences, modern American society has developed a new form of awareness in people, hence a new interest in roots and origins.³¹ In a sense, however, the melting pot did occur because various immigrant groups learnt the same language, acquired the same basic values, and intermarried to a high degree. Conversely, “it may not have occurred in so far as people still draw resources – symbolic, material or political - from ethnic identifications.”³²

12.3 AT THEIR JOURNEY’S END

When the people from the “Landvik-group” landed in Missouri in 1847, they had chosen a home on the edge of so-called civilization. Infrastructure in the newly acquired land was partly missing, though the settlers were quick to build their community and put to use both modern machinery and other tokens of a progressive and expansive community. They did not come to America empty-handed. On the one hand, they were rather well-informed about the situation in the United States (Johan Reinert Reiersen had done an astounding job in gathering information for them) and on the other hand, the political development in Norway

³⁰ D. Aidan McQuillan. *Prevailing over Time: Ethnic Adjustment on the Kansas Prairies, 1875-1925* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1990): 2.

³¹ Nathan Glazer and Daniel A. Moynihan. *Beyond the Melting-pot* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963).

³² Thomas Hylland Eriksen. *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Pluto Press, 2002): 140.

after 1814 had taught them to cherish national independence and personal freedom. Many of them were ideologically alert, and had gained political experience through skirmishes with the peasants' traditional enemy, the civil servants. They were devout Lutherans, active members of the State Church, and would bring with them pietistic tenants of moderation and hard work. Their exodus from Norway did not come about as a whim of the moment. On the contrary, when the experienced and mature peasants and their families eventually broke loose in 1846, it was a well-planned and deliberate act with a main objective: to secure a better future for their children and themselves.

They were only 52 persons when they came to Buchanan County, and their limited number is essential to an understanding of the development of their settlement, and the ensuing process of possible acculturation and assimilation. The Norwegians came to be close neighbours with Germans, Danes, and Americans, and probably felt the pressure of the dominant Anglo-American culture from the start of their society. There is little doubt that they were culturally close to their North-European and American neighbours and probably experienced few problems in getting along with these other ethnic groups, in fact, they had no choice but to make the most out of the situation and be pragmatic. It is likely that they realized the limitations of their possible keeping of Norwegian patterns and traditions, and it is of course telling that some of their children were sent to a Catholic convent school, and that they for long periods shared German pastors with both Danes and Germans.

It seems fair to say that the immigrants in Missouri – and later in Kansas – were by no means tragically uprooted and bitterly alienated. Nor were they transplanted in the sense that they insisted upon and managed to preserve Norwegian language and culture. Their children were quick in learning English, and even their leaders had prepared themselves with English primers on the voyage to America. Some remnants of Norwegian culture obviously lived on, but basically, the small group of white, North European Lutherans quickly became Americans and embraced their new country and its system. They were bent upon gaining their citizenship, and had no intention of going back to Europe. They readily learnt about and put to use American crops and farming techniques, accepted civic obligations, adopted middle-class ways and virtues, put a great effort in securing the children good schools, married outside their ethnic circle, and from an early date gave their children “American” names. They had no qualms about adopting the practises of the growing rural capitalism, and took pride in being successful farmers with a financial basis large enough to extend their holdings and let their families take a cultural and economic stride and taste the wonders of American middle-class life.

The conclusion is therefore that the immigrants of the “Landvik-group” were open to acculturation, became “true” Americans, and were probably assimilated faster than most other Norwegian settlers in America. Generally, the Norwegian nationality group was an important social unit. That was, however, sometimes barred from expressing its identity explicitly since Norwegian and American values often were identical or concurrent.³³ In particular, family loyalty and adherence to a religious denomination were “points for the social consolidation of the nationality group.”³⁴ Such values were no doubt important also for the settlers in Buchanan and Doniphan Counties, but it seems that their social and national web was of a loose nature and quite easily allowed cultural impulses from the surrounding milieu, and a possible urge to express their Norwegian character, was evidently subdued. Their defences against foreign influence were weak, and it remains an open question if they really were interested in putting up a fight for their national values. In a pragmatic view, such a fight seemed unnecessary as long as cherished homeland ideals concurred with American culture, and did not threaten social stability.

The choice of the Frontier as their new home inevitably led settlers into an existence of “a volatile character” where the family represented “the only bulwark against disorder.”³⁵ Such a statement is of course also true for the settlements in Missouri and Kansas, but at the same time it should be kept in mind that the settlers here perhaps enjoyed an uncommon stability, both geographically and socially. Although many of them moved a few miles across the Missouri into Kansas, they refrained from travelling further west, with the exception of some bachelors who for a time were tempted by the gold-rush in California. When Lillian Schlissel describes the Frontier experience as one of “accident and sudden death, childbirth trauma, insanity, marital breakdown and violence, financial misadventures and insolvency, transient relationships and shifting populations”,³⁶ she paints a picture which is very different from the impression of the steady and peaceful progress of the Norwegians along the Missouri. Instead of the lure of new lands further west, they grasped the pleasant commodities and reassuring values of a life of the emerging rural middle-class. Their family life in the latter part of the 19th century was part of the “cult of domesticity”³⁷ which came to dominate perceptions of women’s role in the family. One consequence of this “cult” was the

³³ Peter A. Munch. “Segregation and Assimilation of Norwegian Settlements in Wisconsin”: 140.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Lillian Schlissel. “The Frontier Family: Dislocation and the American Experience” Luther Luedtke, ed. *Making America: The Society & Culture of the United States*: 90.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Tamara K. Hareven. “Continuity and Change in American Family Life” Luther Luedtke, ed. *Making America: The Society and Culture of the United States*: 316.

confinement of women to the sphere of the home. It followed that the family was regarded as “the linchpin of social order” and a guarantee for stable development.³⁸ In Norway they had been used to taking part also in the outdoor activities on the farms, e.g. milking, now they were increasingly linked and bound to the assumption that participation in the labour market would be harmful for the family and society.

The accelerated process of assimilation is undoubtedly connected to their limited number and the cultural pressure of the surrounding society, but one might wonder if the whole background of these pioneers and their tradition of open contacts with the European continent, had within the first two generations prepared the way for a relatively easy transfer of loyalty and identity to their new country.

Rather shortly after their arrival, they were carried forward on a current of “Americanization”. In many other Norwegian settlements such a process was hindered by the development of segregated communities, “transplanted villages”, and throughout the 19th century there were also recurrent attacks on the European cultural remnants by groups like the “Know-Nothing” movement in the 1850s and 1860s and nativist groups in the early 20th century. Often ethnic groups solidified their ethnicity because of these attacks, and further slowed down the process of acculturation and assimilation.

For groups and individuals the question of “Americanization” was a dominant one once they had set foot on American soil. They were forced into a discussion whether to adopt manners, rules, and morals of the receiving nation, and shifting strategies developed. It is therefore essential to distinguish between individual and collective solutions to the problem. In any case, behaviour would be varied and different. Individual variations were large, even within a family group.

The United States is not an ethnic nation like for instance Germany or Norway. It was populated through successive waves of immigration from four continents, and Americans do not share a “semi-mythical” history as European nations do. Many scholars have anticipated the disappearance of ethnicity and nationalism in America. Max Weber, for one, expected that modernization and industrialism would do away with such “primordial phenomena”, but he was evidently wrong. In other words, ethnicity lives, and seems to have become an abiding asset of American civilization. Though the concept itself has been interpreted differently through the years, it has always been connected to “the character or quality of an ethnic

³⁸ Ibid.

group”,³⁹ but more recently anthropologists have stressed that “ethnicity is essentially an aspect of a relationship, not a property of a group.”⁴⁰ This implies that the groups must entertain a minimum of contact with each other, and they must harbour ideas that they are different from the others.⁴¹ To follow Thomas Hylland Eriksen further, “ethnicity is the enduring and systematic communication of cultural differences between groups considering themselves to be distinctive. ... To speak of an ethnic group in total isolation is absurd.”⁴²

The Norwegians in Buchanan and Doniphan Counties fairly soon lost their distinctive Norwegian character, although they for some time remained “hyphenated” Americans. They may have shielded and kept certain residues of their national character and customs for a period, but they were almost undistinguishable from their neighbours in matters of language, religion, and culture when the first generation had passed away by 1885. Only the knowledge that they had originally come from a different nation on the outskirts of Europe gave an exotic flair to their original background, but that had little bearing upon everyday life in St. Joseph or Troy. For all practical purposes, they were Americans, and had perhaps been so in their minds from the very outset of their exodus in 1846.

³⁹ Thomas Hylland Eriksen. *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Pluto Press, 2002): 12.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*: 10.

**CHAPTER XIII:
CONCLUSION**

In the period 1840-1930, 930 people emigrated to America from Hommedal Parish. 726 of these came from Landvik Parish, and 204 from Eide Parish. In a local, yet larger perspective, the 79 pioneers from 1846 spearheaded and paved the way for the swelling waves of migrants who reached the American shores, particularly in the years around the turn of the century. In a practical way the pioneers had shown that determination and stamina might open the doors to a new life on another continent, and psychologically their endeavours gave followers the necessary confidence to move with the support of various kinds of networks established across the Atlantic.

The pioneers from 1846 can hardly be termed quite ordinary people. They were, of course, ordinary in the sense that they represented the common man and woman in Hommedal Parish in the mid 19th century, but this project has demonstrated that their bold decision to migrate across the Atlantic required a character and a personality which in essence was strong and inventive, determined and daring. They were people of the soil, peasants who were able and willing to grasp the opportunities for a better life, made accessible through the advance of modern times, and the smoothing effect of the old culture which had hampered any free movement and development for centuries. On the other side of the ocean lay the “distant magnet” (to use Philip Taylor’s term), the lure and the attraction of the vast farming potential in the fertile prairies in America. Their leaders, in particular, possessed the stamina, experience, and resourcefulness to guide the rest of the group through the dangers and vicissitudes of trans-Atlantic travel, via the great American rivers, to a successful settlement in Missouri. At the core of the exodus from Hommedal Parish one might therefore place the individual emigrants with their special talents and strong characters. In their case, time was in a way ripe to venture into the near-unknown. They were able to raise the necessary capital, financial, social and personal, but their endeavour must of course be seen in the perspective of major social, economic and spiritual tendencies and developments in the 19th century, nationally, regionally, locally, and individually. This present dissertation has been built upon such a structure, assessing the whole “migratory space” from a national level down to the single emigrant farm and its dependants, and thereby establishing the main forces and impulses behind the crucial decision to migrate. In a local perspective, the first part of this work has sought to give a detailed answer to the complex questions: “Why do people emigrate?” or “What does it take to emigrate?”

In a general sense, the 1850s saw the advent of modern times in Norway. A deep change took place in what was still a traditional and static nation, largely an agricultural

society, with few yet growing towns, and a population basically residing in the countryside. Following trends on the European continent, Norway in the mid-1800s would take decisive steps in the direction of an industrialized and mechanized society, giving the rural population new political influence and opportunities, and at the same time seeing that better hygiene, medical development, and nourishment led to an immensely increased population. These trends, which have been termed a metamorphosis of the rural areas, eventually reached and affected Nedenes County and the southern parts of Norway called *Sørlandet*.

It has been a central point in this dissertation to show that this part of Norway was characterized by versatile industries. The farms were on average small, but sustenance was secured through various supplementary activities in forestry, fishing, mining, and shipping. The region was, however, severely affected by the Napoleonic Wars, and was still in the 1830s and 1840s groping to regain the sound financial footing of the turn of the century. It was not until the late 1840s that the towns and parishes of Nedenes County showed signs of an upswing in the economy, particularly in the related activities of forestry and shipping. The repeal of the British Navigation Act in 1849 came to represent a decisive turn in shipping business cycles, and for the next 30 years the Southern region in particular enjoyed the golden opportunities of the age of the tall ships. When this industry collapsed around 1880, revealing that it had been a giant standing on clay feet, *Sørlandet* as a whole was hit by widespread unemployment, and the second phase of Southern emigration was initiated. Replacing the farming pioneers of the 1840s who had sought cheap land in the Middle West, massive waves of unemployed seamen and carpenters, followed by job-seeking maids and servants, crossed the Atlantic and found an income in an extensive job market, especially in Brooklyn. This was a movement which lasted into the 1920s, and brought nearly 3,000 men and women from the Grimstad area to America just in the last quarter of the 19th century.

For the daring pioneers of the 1840s, however, the situation was somewhat different. They were still bound to agricultural activities, but the strong increase in the population had pushed many sons and daughters out of the ancestral farms. In the case of Nedenes County, the population increased by 65% between 1801 and 1855, whereas the twin parishes of Landvik and Eide respectively, showed a growth of 24% and 60% in the same period. The limited (although fertile) land resources gave little room for further division, and the numerous and healthy offspring were forced to seek a new basis of income in other parts of the parishes than on the farm where they were born. For the majority of the people who became involved in the 1846 exodus, this meant that they by the time of emigration had

established themselves and their families in a widening circle from the *Igland* farm. In many ways they came to be inspired by the example of Hans Gasmann of Skien who sold his property and every belonging, settled with his wife and 13 children in Wisconsin, and thereby secured a future for his whole family on the cheap land in the Middle West. In this manner the pioneers from Hommedal Parish must have shared the concerns of many other emigrants: only by selling their properties and venturing into the endless American prairies could they secure a sound future for their many children. The capital raised through the sales in Norway enabled them to finance the journey and purchase large tracts of land which in turn were shared between their children. In Thomas Faist's terminology, the levels of economic development in the sending and receiving country, i.e. the fairly good prices of farms in Norway and the cheap land in America, thus placed the prospective migrants in a favourable position, and opened a possibility to turn to their advantage the fluctuations between the costs and benefits of staying and going.¹

The increase of the population combined with the scarcity of farming land, certainly constituted one of the main push factors for the emigrants from Hommedal Parish. Without exception they lived on rather small farms where the agricultural production was too small to nourish the growing number of dependants on the farms. Their livestock production did not do much to improve their situation, and when the recession in forestry and shipping industries lingered well into the 1840s, they embraced the spreading news of the good life in America, and started on a migration process in their family network and among friends who were sympathetic to the idea of emigration. Some four years later these considerations and deliberations would eventually lead them into actual departure from Norway. One of the main goals in this dissertation has consequently been to demonstrate the crucial role played by one single family in the course of emigration from their home parish. The *Igland* family came to dominate the 1846 exodus completely, in the sense that the leaders were of *Igland* stock and all other participants were in some way related to that same family. In the years that followed, i.e. the intensive period up to 1855, connections within this family network ignited a chain migration, brought new settlers to the colonies in Missouri and Kansas, and cemented the stance set by the *Igland* family on these rather isolated Norwegian settlements.

In Landvik Parish people of the *Igland* family had for centuries played the part of pillars in society - socially, politically and ideologically. A surprisingly high number of the family members were leaders, were well-read, enjoyed respect and support from their fellow

¹ Faist. "From Common Questions to Common Concepts": 247.

parishioners, and held positions in political life. As has also been demonstrated, they were critical opponents of the ruling class of civil servants, and possessed the necessary character to lead in the daring and demanding process of breaking out from their ancestral parish. The gradual dismantling of the old society and the old ways was in other words a prerequisite for the possibility and ultimate success of emigration to another continent. To repeat Thomas Faist's theory, the concepts embedded in the "meso-level" point to the basic idea in this project that the process of emigration from Hommedal Parish in the 1840s was in fact a process of liberation from the restraints of the old society, and consequently made possible by the advance of cultural and ideological factors which caused the decay of the ancient, inflexible and all too stable social system. In a similar, though "reverse" process, their cultural ballast facilitated the actual settlement in Missouri and Kansas, and eased their progress towards successful establishment in America.

It required courage, stamina, and self-reliance to oppose the admonitions of national and religious leaders to remain in the country and build the nation. In the case of emigration from Hommedal Parish in the early period, as with other communities similarly affected by emigration, the basic mechanisms and economic repercussions of a growing population and lack of farming land were not enough to explain why emigration took place. The bridging effect of the "meso-level", the cultural, ideological and social factors found in the local community and the family network must be added to the push factors, and only the sum total explains how and why the process of emigration was carried through. This present study therefore concurs with modern migration research in the insistence upon the important role played by family networks in the migration process. It has been made clear that migration decisions are not an exclusive matter for individual persons, but rather a combined effort carried out in collaboration between family members and associated networks.

For the people in Hommedal Parish, however, yet another factor was of essential value in their deliberations and eventual implementation of the decision to emigrate: the campaign fought and the advice brought forth by editor and pathfinder Johan Reinert Reiersen.

Johan R. Reiersen engaged a series of liberal and humanitarian battles in the 1840s. From his home base in Kristiansand he also challenged the authorities of the realm on the issue of emigration, and soon became a champion for the right of anybody to seek a new life in another country. Contact was soon established between the editor and the prospective emigrants from Hommedal Parish, via links of family and friendship, and simply because the good men of Hommedal Parish were well-read and well-informed citizens of their time. The

three leaders of the exodus, Osul Nielsen Enge, Anders Nielsen Holte, and Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven, bought his services, and agreed upon sponsoring a scouting expedition to America for a sum of 300 “spesiedaler”. On his return, Reiersen presented his sponsors with his *Pathfinder*, a travel guide which contained an astonishing amount of solid and sound information. In this manner, the people in the “Landvik-group” had secured themselves vital information about the New World, a sensible move which would turn out to be both “risk-reducing” and “cost-reducing” on their journey to the *Promised Land*.

This dissertation has presented information to show that many factors carried forward the ultimate decision to emigrate. Economic and social forces on a “macro-” and a “micro-level” contributed, as did more elusive cultural, social and spiritual trends and developments, but in the last analysis it was Johan R. Reiersen’s hurried journey through the South and the Middle West in 1842 and 1843 which gave him the necessary status to act as a triggering mechanism for the peasants of Hommedal Parish. He was definitely an inspiration for them, furnished them with important observations and advice about settlement in America, and undoubtedly held them high in esteem and eagerly awaited their participation in his Texas colony.

Much to his dismay and bitter disappointment, the “Landvik-group” chose a different path once they left New Orleans after a fairly long stay in the city in 1847. They travelled north on the Mississippi, and never again made contact with their former associate. A string of facts and circumstantial evidence have been presented to demonstrate that the change of plans was no coincidence.

The Norwegian settlers had travelled together with German emigrants on the *Izette*, and may through personal contacts have received positive impressions of the state Missouri, which received large numbers of German settlers in the pioneer years. Of similar importance was the rumour that Missouri was a “Jeffersonian Arcadia” where the farmers enjoyed freedom and respect. During their stay in New Orleans in the winter of 1847, the people of the “Landvik-group” witnessed troop movements and heard rumours of the war in Texas and Mexico. Such impressions may have been frightening, and contributed to deter the Norwegians from joining Johan R. Reiersen in *Four Mile Prairie*. The triumphant return from the American-Mexican War of Colonel Doniphan and his troops from Missouri may also have boosted their emerging plan of going north. As demonstrated by Frank G. Nelson (a descendant of Peder Nelson Kalvehaven), there was, however, yet another important factor behind the seemingly mystic change of destination.

On arrival in St. Joseph, the company of 52 Norwegians was met on the *Roubidoux Landing* by Augustus Weddle (Vedel), a Danish aristocrat who had been expelled from the Danish Court. He had come to St. Joseph with his son and a servant, and was ready to invite Peder Kalvehaven and his family to stay with him until they had found proper accommodation. The meeting on the landing cannot have been a coincidence because Weddle had brought with him a wagon, and the whole happening carried the marks of a premeditated action with old acquaintances finally meeting. Frank G. Nelson's research has brought to light the connections between Weddle's Danish family and Johan R. Reiersen's arch enemy, the chief of police in Kristiansand. It seems reasonable to assume that words of the smear campaign against Reiersen had travelled all the way to Augustus Weddle and on to Peder Kalvehaven, his old acquaintance. We do not know to what extent Peder Kalvehaven and his company heeded the warnings against Reiersen, but it seems reasonable to draw the conclusion that the editor fell in status and that Peder Kalvehaven in some way had steered his fellows towards Missouri. The factors mentioned above had strengthened his resolve, although it remains unclear if his "secret" plan had been made before leaving Norway, or after they had arrived in New Orleans. Anyway, contact with Johan R. Reiersen was severed and Missouri became the new home for the settlers from Hommedal Parish.

By turning their backs on Johan R. Reiersen and the settlers in Texas, the people of the "Landvik-group" strongly emphasized the individualistic character of their enterprise. They had taken a route quite different from most Norwegian immigrants, had trusted their own instincts and personal resources, had heeded Johan R. Reiersen's advice in the *Pathfinder*, and would remain a rather isolated and small Norwegian colony on the Frontier, little noticed among later migration researchers, and more open to foreign influences than more numerous and more compact settlements in the northern parts of the United States. This project may have succeeded in giving them a well-deserved, yet modest place in the history of Norwegian immigration to America.

By following the pioneers across the Atlantic, towards their end station in St. Joseph, and the ensuing process of settlement and adjustment, the dissertation has complied with the well-founded call to see both sides in the matter of migration, i.e. taking into account essential characteristics and developments in the sending as well as the receiving country. It has been fundamental to demonstrate and make probable that the decision to emigrate from Hommedal Parish in 1846 was not founded on a desperate wish to escape from dismal and hopeless

conditions in the home parish. The pioneers were in many respects quite cultivated and well-off peasants. Their act of burning their bridges did carry the signs of liberation, but it must be underscored that their yearning for a better life for the whole family was fuelled by a surplus of energy and initiative.

Whereas the first part of the task has largely been based on issues and questions connected to the mechanisms of macro-, micro-, and meso-levels within economics, sociology, history, cultural and spiritual developments, and the role of group decisions and family networks, the second (“American”) part has necessarily shown a shift in focus and concentration upon central questions about assimilation, integration, and the ideological polarity of “transplanted villages” vs. “Americanization”.

The study has clearly shown that the members of the “Landvik-group” certainly met with hardships of illness and death during their six weeks’ stay in New Orleans, but once they had arrived in St. Joseph, they were in a rather favourable position. Fairly soon they had purchased land in a changing market where many settlers left for Oregon and California and had put up for sale land and houses. The Norwegians were thus able to avoid the time-consuming task of providing their families with a roof over their heads, and could instead devote their energies to securing an income by planting, sowing, and harvesting before the cold set in. Peder Nelson Kalvehaven took the longest time to select his farm, and in the end purchased more than 800 acres, whereas the rest of the people in the company were mostly content with the standard 160 acres. In the first phase of the settlement the immigrants from Hommedal Parish had consequently met one of their main targets after a surprisingly short time in America; they had been able to buy enough land, equipment and livestock to live well on their farms, and in most cases owned land to divide and pass on to their children, if the children so desired. What had seemed a modest sum in Norway had in other words enabled them to travel to America, and still have at their disposal more than the necessary \$1,000 to invest in a farm of a considerable size, compared to Norwegian standards.

When they disembarked from the *Old Hickory* at the *Roubidoux Landing*, there were only 52 people left of the original group. Some had died in New Orleans, some had gone on to other destinations like Wisconsin, and their limited number soon made them vulnerable to pressure and influence from the native environment.

Their first pastor, Laurentius Larsen, remarked when he first came to the settlement in 1860 that they were surprisingly “Americanized”. In the period from 1847 until Larssen and other Norwegian pastors discovered the Missouri and Kansas settlements around 1860, the

people of the “Landvik-group” put a lot of effort into establishing what they felt were the cornerstones in their new societies: a church and a school. This study has, however, clearly demonstrated that neither the mother colony in St. Joseph nor the daughter colony in Doniphan County, were numerous enough to build and sustain their own Norwegian institutions. Indeed, from the very first year of settlement the pioneers relied upon cooperation with German and Danish immigrants in educational, religious, social, and agricultural matters. The settlements never took on the character of “transplanted villages” where Norwegian customs and ways of life were cherished and protected from outward influence. On the contrary, the pioneers from Hommedal Parish saw their children in many cases marry outside their own circle, they shared pastors (especially with German settlers), they soon mastered the English language, they abandoned their inherited naming customs to give their new-born children American-sounding names, and even sent their children to Catholic convent schools. They were all farmers, and although some of the younger men volunteered for service in the Army for a while, they embraced the growing rural capitalism, and adopted American farming practises and concentrated their efforts on growing staple crops like wheat, corn, and hemp. Into these dominant American practises, they in some few cases managed to introduce and retain their old expertise as fruit producers and potato growers. Generally, they did well as farmers, even compared to their successful American, German, and Danish neighbours. In the span of a few years, their farming investments had paid off rather handsomely, and they could no doubt have returned to Norway in comfort if they had wanted to do so. But nobody did, except for some few, short visits. In reality there was hardly a way back to the old country. Bridges had been burnt, and certainly an element of pride incited them to carry through what they had set out to accomplish: to secure a freer and better life for themselves and the next generations.

They did not distinguish themselves in political or social affairs during the first decade of the settlement, but after the split of the colony near the end of the 1850s, Osul Enge Nelson led and encouraged others to fill positions in education and the judicial system. Some followed his example, but on the whole the pioneers of the first two generations remained tillers of the soil, loyal, respected, and hard-working citizens, but very much inconspicuous little wheels in the great machine. The most noteworthy exception to this observation was of course N.O. Nelson, the industrialist, who exemplified the possibilities for immigrants with talent and initiative.

This project has emphasized the undisputed fact that a small number of immigrants will have difficulty in defending their old culture and traditional ways against the forces of the

surrounding environment. This was the situation for the “Landvik-group”, but one might also suggest that their local Norwegian background contributed to their quick adaptation and assimilation to the greater society. Historically and traditionally *Sørlandet* had for ages been strongly connected to the sea and bound to activities related to seafaring. It had so to speak “always” been open to the European continent, and was ready to internalize impulses and trends from abroad. A few examples will highlight the situation: “jarls” from the Grimstad-area ruled the Orkney Islands around 1100 A.D., oak timber from the same district had literally given Amsterdam its foundation in the 17th century, and in the 19th century seamen from the region emerged as the foremost freighters of the world.

It cannot be proved, but it is feasible that the migrants from Hommedal Parish carried with them to America a disposition for openness and a readiness to adopt new cultural impulses and new ways of life. The study of these brave men and women concur with this theory of flexibility and adaptability. It has been hinted at, yet cannot be documented that they may have developed alternative strategies of adaptation through their close relationship with German and Danish neighbours. If so, such strategies might have redirected the obvious pressure to assimilate with the dominant Anglo-American culture, and would probably have centred on “Nordic” characteristics of e.g. race, class, or gender, and thereby have crossed the boundaries of traditional categorization. On the surface, and probably in depth, however, it certainly seems that assimilation with traditional American values went its speedy way for the Norwegians in St. Joseph and East Norway.

After the first decade of consolidation in St. Joseph, a considerable number of the settlers decided to move into the newly opened prairies of Doniphan County, Kansas. It was not a long move, only 25-30 miles across the river, and in most cases relations between the two colonies were kept intact, although the lines of communication were stretched. Basically, Kansas offered more, cheaper and often better land, and many of the farmers were obviously tempted by the prospects of extending their properties. The stretching of communication lines, however, certainly weakened their defences against outside influence.

From the outset, family and group relations had been close and the three leaders of the company had co-operated well for the benefit of all. Towards the end of the 1850s, however, remarks in their letters indicate a certain souring of relations between Osul Enge Nelson and Peder Kalvehaven Nelson. It is possible that the growing bitterness and even antagonism between the two venerable leaders speeded the split of the mother colony, although economic considerations undoubtedly played the major part. It is also reasonable to assume that Peder Nelson’s use of slave labour on his farm antagonized his fellows, and might have widened the

gap between himself and his cousin. There is no reason to doubt that Peder Nelson was a benign master who cared well for his workers. From his point of view, the use of slave labour was probably only a sign that he had adopted local ways, and in a practical way made use of “normal” practises of rural capitalism in Missouri in the mid-1800s. In other words, there is no indication that he had become a slave owner on ideological grounds or sympathized with the South in the Civil War. For the colonies in Missouri and Kansas alike, the Civil War and the guerrilla warfare across the border represented a grave and dismal situation, and in both settlements young men volunteered to fight with the North. There is no record of participation with the Confederacy.

In the last analysis, the migrants of the “Landvik-group” were strong-willed and hard-working Lutherans who succeeded in reaching their prime target: building a new existence on foreign soil, and thereby securing a better and brighter future for themselves and their children. The whole process of transition to another continent was, of course, not an easy one. In fact, their exodus rested on the premise that they were able and willing to endure the hardships and tribulations of trans-Atlantic travel, and on a fundamental level, possessed the means and disposition to break away from their ancestral homes in the hope of finding a freer and better life on the virgin soil of America.

Theirs was a one-way journey, and their seemingly rapid assimilation into the United States was accompanied by their wish to take the oath, and become American citizens as fast as possible. In fact, in a rather short time they mingled with their American environment, and in many ways became almost undistinguishable from their neighbours, although some small tokens of cherished Norwegian tradition were observed.

In most respects, this project has therefore proven that their move was a successful one. They did find a freer and richer life, they were well-off financially, and like the immigrants in Jon Gjerde’s studies, they managed to climb the social ladder and become farmers of the rural middle class. The peasants had indeed taken a giant stride from their small farms and restricted land resources in Norway into the vast prairies and rich promises of America. These farmers must have been content to see their children well catered for and able to build their lives on a firm foundation.

There is, however, a slight amount of uncertainty in this argumentation. Despite their material success, is it all the same fair to ask what might had happened to the “Landvik-group” if they had postponed their exodus another five to ten years? Their departure came at a time when Norway, and particularly the Southern districts, was at a balance point and

beginning to show the first signs of the enormous economic upswing which would affect *Sørlandet* in the following decades. Had the emigrants remained in Norway, they would probably have been able to exploit the opportunities of the golden years of the tall ships, presupposing that they were flexible and intent on making shipbuilding or seafaring their career. This is of course hypothetical hindsight, and unfair to the emigrants who had to make their decision based on information available in their environment in the period 1842-1846. Had they waited, however, it is perhaps likely that a journey to the *Promised Land* would have taken on the character of a circular process: from one *Canaan* to another, with little gains to be won. As it happened, they acted on the troublesome situation of the 1840s, and substituted their homely *Canaan* with a larger and expanding *Promised Land*. They have revealed little of the emotions involved in the move, and one may only guess what emotional sacrifices the pioneers had to bear to have the satisfaction to see the next generation prosper.

PART THREE:

**LETTERS FROM THE
PIONEERS**

LETTERS FROM THE PIONEERS

Most of the following 22 letters are found in the *Igland-collection*, deposited at Aust-Agder Arkivet/ *County Archives* in Arendal (dep. no. 10/ 1992. Section 64). In the 1960s Nils P. Igland undertook the task of copying the original letters, only slightly modernizing the Norwegian spelling in the process. This collection of letters from America is largely built upon Mr. Igland's impeccable work and with the addition of letters nos. 4-8 and 15-16 which are printed here by courtesy of Anna Igland Bendixen (copies of original letters in her private collection).¹ The remaining letters were found among papers left by the late Nora C. Nelson in St. Joseph, Missouri.

The Norwegian versions of the letters are printed in full, retaining the slightly confusing mixture of idiosyncracies, personalized spelling, no set system of capital letters, elements of dialect, and lack of standardized punctuation. Yet, in some cases they show a varied and impressive vocabulary, have passages of poetic beauty, and are clearly written by men of some learning. These early documents of immigrant experiences are highly personal, but should in no way be seen as a representative canon of the immigrant experience. They are, on the contrary, fairly random, made available through dedicated, yet often occasional and fortuitous efforts by local collectors. They do, however, offer revealing and touching glimpses of *la condition humaine* in the early stages of Norwegian settlement in Missouri and Kansas.

The English translation tries, in a modest way, to reflect the mood and tone of the Norwegian originals. However, they are "normalized" in the sense that spelling has been modernized, punctuation has been inserted to make the reading easier, and both personal and geographical names have been corrected. In other words, it has been more important to convey the meaning and content of the letters than to render a word-for-word translation. The elements of dialect have naturally been lost in translation. Parts of the texts have in some cases been blotted out or lost.

The letters are grouped according to author. Missing parts and incomprehensible handwriting are marked with Uncertain interpretations are marked with a (?).

Translation into English is mine, unless otherwise stated.

¹ Letter no. 16 is printed in Volume II of Orm Øverland and Steinar Kjærem. *Fra Amerika til Norge, Norske utvandrerbrev, I-III* (Oslo: Solum Forlag, 1992-93).

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Letter no. 1:**From: Osul Nilsen Enge (b. 1802, d. 1880)****To: Brothers, sisters, and friends****Place/ date: Buchanan County in Missouri, July 16, 1848**

Kjære søskende og venner!

Jeg tager nu pennen for at tilkjendegive eder hvorledes jeg lever, hvor jeg er gået hen, og noget om landet og forholdene her. Jeg vil også sige eder når og hvorledes vi kom hertil. Vi kom til New Orleans den 9de jan. f. år efter 8 ugers seilas fra Havre hvor alt gikk lykkelig og væl. Der var særdeles snille folk om bord både offiserer og matroser de var ikke at sette i sammenligning med de norske vi hadde været om bord hoss tilforn, man hørte hoss Amerikanerne verken prygling eller sjelling, som hørte til dagens orden hos de usle norske skonnert offiserer.

Vi forlod New Orleans den 1ste april f. år i følge: jeg, Peder Kalvehagen, Osul Løvåsen, Anders Holte, Lars Stensvand, Ole Konnestad, Astri Østerhus, Simon Kålåsen, Torjus Hardeberg, Kristen Bjellandslien, da vi alle aktede oss til Missouri. De øvrige av selskabet gikk nogle til Viskonsin og nogle var gået tilforn for at søge arbeid. Vi kom til byen St. Joseph den 14de april s.m. som var omtrent 1800 mil fra New Orleans, og her i nærheten er det vi nu bor. Det blev fortalt for flere efter veien at St. Josephs omegn var et av de beste steder i Missouri man kunde nædsette sig på for at få godt land og godt marked som jeg og tror var riktig. Jeg løb rundt her i 2 uger for at se mig om efter land da det meste av det bedste landet var optaget i nærheten av byen, enten klaimt eller kjøpt, dog her var en mængde som vilde sælge formue for at reise til Oregon. Det er her med at reise til Oregon som i Norge med at reise til Amerika og St. Joseph er det sted hvor de sætter over Missouri floden for at drage igjennom Indianernes territori over klippe bjerge til ommeldte land. De har også her at proviantere for reisen hvilket bidrager meget til byens og stedets opkomst.

Omtrent 7 mile² i syd sydøst fra St. Joseph kjøpte jeg en Claim 160 Ækers³ land hvor der var oppbygget stue kjøkken ... og stald, yderst simpelt og på nybygger vis dog stuen var en av de bedste nybygger hus jeg har set her da den var tèt og varm. Omtrent 40 Ækers var indhægnet 30 Ækers opbrakket, 7 a 8 besået med vintersåde. Jeg fik i samme kjøpet en god hest 12 kører

² Mile = ca. 1,6 km.

³ Ækers = acres; 1 acre = ca. 0,4 hektar.

10 får 27 svin, alt med småt og stort. To jæs, 50 høns og desforuden gårdsredskaber og indbo. 2 ... 8 stoler et vengebord et skab, alt solid og godt. En mahogni finert dragkiste et stueur, halvedelen i en brakplog og en mindre plov, hakker spader, samt en del kjøkkentøi som gryder kjedler m.m. for alt dette til sammen betalte jeg 420 dollars. Jeg har desforuden at betale til regjæringen eller Missouri stat for landet 200 dollars som skal betales i 3 på hinanden følgende år i mars måned hvoraf jeg har betalt den første termin.

Dette landet tilhører Missouri stat. Da her er en hel del land som tilhører ommeldte stat der er givet i et vist øiemed hvorav mit er endel. Jeg kjøpte desforuden 40 Ækers skovland ved siden af det øvrige, af regjæringslandet som jeg betalte med det samme, da der var næsten ingen skov på det første. Astrid Østerhus har kjøpt Land ved siden af mit, Osuld Løvåsen og Lars Stensvand omtrent 1 mile fra mig, Peder Kalvehagen omtrent 3 mile fra mig, alle på samme måde som mig og samme slags land, og der imellom haver Ole Konnestad og en fra Tromø Sogn Peder Eilertsen Claimet nær 8 Ækers.

Her var ingen Norske før vi kom her i nærheden, alene en dansk mand var kommet her høsten før vi kom. Jeg kan også sige eder kjære søskende og venner at jeg er væl fornøyet i min reise hertil da her er gode udsigter for fremtiden både for mig og for min famelie. Friske og sunde er jeg med famelien min Gud ske takk, som vi og har været siden vi kom hertil. Jeg for min del har ikke været så jævnt frisk på over 20 år som jeg har været siden jeg kom her til.

De flæste af de andre norske hær har også været jævnt friske. En del har havt noget Climat eller koldfeber men er for nærværende alle væl. Peder Kalvehaven har lidt mest da han var syg næsten hele avvigte vinter dog han er nu bedre. Jeg vil også få sige eder at det er gåt mig hidentil langt over min forvændtning da jeg væntede aldrig da jeg forlod Norge her at få hus og gård så vidt færdig med besætning og husgeråd af enhver slags i så rigelighed for den lille kapital jeg hadde tilbage da jeg kom her efter en så lang og kostbar reise. Det havde jeg aldrig ventet, hvilket dere vist vil indrømme mig.

Landet her er overmåde fruktbart. Her gror hvad man planter i rig overflod, og som dere vel ved foruden gjødsel, skjønt jorden nyder for det meste en skjødesløs og dårlig behandling. Det meste her planter en mais eller korn som det her kalles. Vede hamp og havre, dog det siste kun til kreaturet. Kornet bliver og det meste fortæret av kreaturet og svin skjønt det var god og sund menneskeføde dog det giver noget tørt brød men passer overmåde væl til den

mængde flæsk som her spises. Her avles også en del poteter, rug bygg og mange forskellige hagevækster.

Det er beundringsværdig at se hvorledes mange ting gror her. Hamp som er en så kjælen vext i Norge voxer her til 10-12 fods høide og mer alene ved at pløie og så. Humle voxer vildt så jeg i den beste dørkede humlehave i Norge ikke har set dens lige. Kornet voxer på en stilk meget lig det norske rør af omtrent 2 tommers tykkelse 10-12 fods høide med en blomsterdusk på toppen, omtrent mit på stilken skyder et eller to ax du, og på vært ax er undertiden 1000 korn og vært korn større end en sukkerert noget fladaktig så kan dere heraf gjøre et lidet begreb om hvorledes det lønner. Det bliver plantet omtrent i omtrent 4 fods afstand fra hverandre hver vei, og 3-4 korn sammen på hvert sted. Når kornet er omtrent moden hugges stilken med axene på af, med en håndøks eller en anden dertil gjort øks og sættes sammen i reisinger til vinterfoder så mange man tror at behøve. Det øvrige bliver stående på stubben til vinteren når det falder beleilig da kjører man rundt over ageren med vognen, brækker axene av stilken og kaster i vognen kjørt til et dertilgjort kornhus hvor det blir liggende til man forbruger det hvilket for det meste er til svin og kreaturet da det er kuns en liden del folk kan række at fortære av det. Det lønner seg kun lidet at sælge da prisen er 10-12 cent bushelen.⁴ Stilken bliver stående til man skal til at pløie da bliver de afhugget lagte i dynger og brændt. Prisen på vede er almindelig 50 cent bushelen.

Hamp er det beste som her avles til salg da den giver mange ganger så meget utbytte som vede og andet man avler til salg pr æker, men den utfordrer meget arbeidskraft. Jeg antager med bestemthed at her er bedre end i det nordlige Illinois og Viskonsin da hamparten ikke væl kan drives der som er mest fordelagtig. Korn trives heller ikke så godt.

Vilde frugter er her en hel del af, af forskjellige slags. Plummetrær er her hele skoger af og bærer ræt gode plummer. Haslenødder ere så mange at det er ubeskrivelig. Grasset gror på sine stæder hvor det er noget laftliggende jævnt med axelen på en man til hest, hvor kreaturene går og gresser. Jeg forsikrer eder at jeg værken kan sige det, ei heller det kan forstås av dem som ikke har været udenfor Norges grændser hvorledes det groer her så jeg vil ikke sige mere derom.

⁴ Bushel = ¼ tønne = 27,22 kg.

Kreaturet går ude vinter og sommer da fjøs haves ikke til verken køer eller svin. Stald haves til et par hester som de mest bruger, de øvrige går ude. Kreaturet bliver fort lit (...) om vinteren til hjælp med rug, og andet som de tager i skoven. Her er også en lætvint måde at gjæde på, man giver dem alene noget salt et par ganger om dagen for at vænne dem til at komme jem. Melkekuene påpasset på den måden. Kalvene bliver indestængt i en have, når koen kommer jem lader man kalven patte lit og så mælker koen, lader den så patte noget mer stænger den så inde igjen. Så går koen af at gresse til næste mælketid hvor den nesten altid infinder sig, og således er enhver ting indrettet og på en letvint måde.

Naturen er også meget gunstig her i enhver henseende. Jorden er såre let at arbeide. Diger behøves ikke, sten har man ikke at vælte på, man behøver alene at indhægne det stykke man vil dørke og såe. Hva man her kalder at dørke er at pløie med en stor plov trukken av 8 til 10 oxer der lager en fure 18-24 tommer bred. Det gror ikke så godt det første år især på præri eller græsmark da græsvolden må rodne før jorden bliver rigtig sjør. Jorden består av en blanding av muld og fin sand, så fin at man ikke kan føle den med fingrene, ler og kalk så den er såre læt at arbeide når den først er brekket.

For mig synes det virkelig at dette land av skaberen må være bestemt til menneskers bolig men langt fra ikke Norge. Jeg skulde ønske at hele Norges befolkning var her, især den ringe del deraf, de behøvde ikke at lide mangel for føden når de kuns vilde og kunde arbeide noget, om ikke så meget. Her var plads nok for dem alle. Jeg mener ikke just dette sted, men rundt i landet, dog jeg tør forsikre vis min eiendom var opdyrket og beplantet med korn godt vilde føde hele Eide sogns befolkning.

Landet her er ikke aldeles slædt men noget bakket med lange hellinger afvæxlende med prærier og små skogstrækninger beliggende i mellem Missouri og Plate floden 39 ½ grad N.B. godt marked har man i byen St. Joseph hvor man kan sælge varer produkter nesten altid til kontant.

Det er en ny by 4 år gammel i meget opkomst. Den teller omtrent 1700 mennesker. Der drives meget handel, har mange kramboder større end de største i Arendal, har 3 kirker, flere skoler dog privat, og et praktfuldt rådhus. Der er også i byen en vand og en damp kværnmølle, to dampaugmøller, den tredie under arbeid, to uldklædemaskiner. En by lig denne kan ikke Norge fremvise av alder og opkomst hvormeget dets mange tykmavede end prale deraf. Spinde og vævemaskiner er her endnu ikke oprættet da alting er nyt, her kan ikke alt blive

færdig på en gang. De eldste sætlere har kuns været her i 10 år, her spindes og væves omtrent på samme måde som i Norge.

Enkelte terskemaskiner er her allerede, men for øvrig tærskes på den måde: Man skuffer den løse jord af på en rund plan hvor maden lægges, og rider rundt derpå med 4 a 6 heste til maden er aftrampet. Agnene bliver fraskildte med en liden maskin der trekkes med en sveiv hvilket her er mange af. En terskemaskin er nylig bekostet ikke ræt langt herfra for 300 dollars hvormed kan tærskes indtil 400 bushel om dagen, hvor maden kommer rensset lige i sækken, halmen og agnene er fraskildt og kommer en anden vei.

Ordentlige kirker er endnu ikke byggede her på landet men her holdes gudstjeneste i folks huser her og der, hvor prediken bliver bestemt. I sommer skal bygges en kirke 3 a 4 mil fra min bopæl. I almindelighed er folket religiøst og søndagen holdes meget hellig. Skoler er her flere af i omegnen. Der blev for en tid siden udlat tomt til et skolehus på siden av min eiendom, men huset er endnu ikke påbegyndt. Mine døtre Gurine og Maren var i byen St. Joseph sidst vinter i 3 måneder i skole, hvorfor jeg betalte i løn til skoleholderen 5 dollars. Kost og logi fik de for at arbeide i mellemstundene for den de logerede hoss. Trine og Terje var også i skole en tid sist høst 1 ½ mil fra min bopæl på landet, dog det var lidet bevændt dermed da læreren var ikke videre.

Sundhedstilstanden er her i almindelighed god da sygelighed synes at være mindre end der hvor jeg kom fra i Norge. Luften er ren og behagelig. Godt og klart drikkevand er her over alt. Jeg har flere kilder eller opkom på min eiendom. Lide med regn eller uveir. Den meste regntid er mai juni og juli. Høsten er almindelig tør og sjelden regn. Vinteren er ligeledes nesten jamt godt veir med behagelige solskinsdage, dog undertiden sne og koldt. Her var sidst vinter 2 ganger 4 tommer høy sne, men forrige vinter var den største 12 tommer som var den strengeste vinter siden man begynte at setle her. Sneen ligger ikke længe da solen og luften fortærer den om få dage. Her bliver og om vinteren undertiden meget koldt så jeg ved ikke om jeg har følt det koldere i Norge. Det fryser så at rimet hænger i skjægget, men det varer i almindelighed ikke mer end 2-3 dage så er det mildt igjen. Sist vinter var det 3 ganger så koldt. Det er nesten utrolig at kreaturet kan leve udenhus, det er jælpn den varer så kort, dog det hender at kalver og høns fryser igjel og grisene fryser ørene av sig. Våren begynder i almindelighed i april og grasset begynder da at skyde frem. Sommervarmen er undertiden så

stærk at det er hart at foreta tungt arbejde i solen men det har lighed med kulden den varer heller ikke længe.

Hva jeg skal sige her er til besvær synes for mig virkelig meget lide. Skatter og afgifter er en ubetydelighed, der er endnu ikke krævet noget av os norske. Fattigbidrag kræves ikke. Virkelige fattige eller brødmangel kjennes ikke hvilket lader sig læt begribe da man føder kreaturet med omtrent det samme man spiser selv. Jeg har heller ingen betlere set her. Fluer og myg er her ikke til besvær verken for mennesker eller dyr. Musseter (?) findes ikke her, hverken to eller firbente rovdyr er her ikke mer end den usle prærieulven hvilket er meget sjelden. Jeg har endnu ikke set nogen af dem. Slanger er her vel en del af men slæt ikke fuldt af dem. Jeg så flere på en morgen i Norge end alle dem jeg har set i Amerika, og heller ikke anrette nogen skade. Jeg hørte en mand avvigte sommer som blev bidt af en klapperslange men blev strax helbredet deraf. Jeg kjender tobente slanger i Norge der er langt farligere end selve klapperslangen. Der går en M.P.⁵ og skuler nede i Grimstad. Jeg vil virkelig bede enhver at tage sig i akt for dem, da deres bid er farligere end selve klapperslangens her. Gode veier er her over alt så man med vogn kan kjøre til hver mands dør. Gode love til beskyttelse for frihed og ret. Man hører kun lidet til stevninger og prosesser. Bliver her en prosess engang i mellem så er den avgjort strax, man spilder ikke så meget tid her, ei heller så mange penge på øvrigheden som i Norge for at få sin ret gjældende.

Den som forøvrigt ønsker at vide noget om Amerika i almindelig han læser Gasmands og Reiersens beskrivelse derover, da jeg finder deres beretning i alt væsentlig så aldeles stemmende med sandheden, i alt hva jeg hidtil har kunnet erfare, så jeg forsikrer eder jeg er ofte falden i forundring ved at læse i Reiersens veiviser, hvorledes en mand i så kort en tid kunde indsamle så meget kundskab. Det er og noget som siger sig selv at en beskrivelse der omfatter det hele ikke kan passe til hver enkelt smålighed da her er forskellige love og indretninger i enhver stat og hvert konty. Det er nyttig for den der har veiviser og vil reise til Amerika at tage den med, da der er forskellige veiledninger der kan komme til nytte efter man er kommet hertil.

Det eneste jeg ikke synes at kan være enig med Reiersen er reise måden over New Orleans. Derimod er jeg enig med Gasmand om at reise om New York, thi jeg tror det måtte være

⁵ See note to English translation , *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 1.*

rettere og bedre. Da kan man reise over Nordsjøen foråret og har hele sommeren at reise på. Man kommer den vei ikke så langt i syd, så varmen bliver ikke så stærk og klimaet ikke så forandreligt som over New Orleans. Man kan over New York så vel som over New Orleans komme til Missouri eller hvilket andet sted man ønsker sig i Missisipidalen. Vel vil reisen op ad landet blive mer kostbar den vei men jeg tror i almindelighed at man vil komme billigere fra Norge til New York end til New Orleans så det i det hele ikke vil blive så betydelig forskjel. I alfald vil jeg fraråde dem der agter at reise til New Orleans ikke at reise på en tid så de skal komme til at stoppe i New Orleans men på en tid da han kan komme op ad landet med det samme, thi ved at stoppe der videre længe ere de udsat både for pengetab og sygdom, da de flæste nykommere der bliver angrepet af heftig mavesyge eller løst liv som vandet forårsager på den som ikke er vant dertil hvilket undertiden bliver dødelig. At fortjene noget der er heller ikke at gjøre regning på da imigrasjonen tiltager så sterkt med hvert år at en fjerdepart ikke kan få arbeid som følge deraf, og den nykomne som ikke kan sproget bliver altid tilbage. Jeg finder det heller ikke nyttig for den der vil reise til Amerika at tage andet med sig end hva de behøver på reisen da her er enhver ting at få kjøpt, og nesten enhver ting for bedre kjøb end i Norge, og tillige solid og godt. Noget læt verktoij kan dog være godt at have med da det ofte kommer til nytte på reisen.

Anders Holte har bedt mig når jeg skriver til eder jeg vilde hilse fra ham, da han tilligemed Lars Håbesland Kristian Stensvand Cristen Bjellandslien og Torjus Hardeberg ere gåede ind som Vollenters eller soldater for at gjøre en reise ind i Indianernes territorium på Oregon veien over for St. Joseph. De ere i følge 5 Companier. Hensikten med deres reiser er at bygge et fort eller forsvarssted mod Indianerne for de der reise til Oregon da det har hendt at emigrantene har blit berøvet på reisen. Disse soldater har det der ræt godt som over alt i Amerikansk Tjeneste de hverken sulter eller tørster, ei heller blive de pryglede som på Norsk maner, men de bliver provianterede med de bedste levnedsmidler som er i landet av enhver slags, og det i sådan rigelighed at de slæt ikke kan spise det op ja indtil sæbe at vaske sig i. Færskt kjød to ganger om ugen af udsøgt unge oxer, enda må ikke halsstøkket gives dem men bliver kuttet af klos ved bauen. Deres løn er omtrent 30 dollars om måneden, og 60 akers land når de kommer tilbake. Men de må holde sig selv hæst (de som er røttene). De har nu været der omtrent et år, og er ventedes tilbake om 2 måneder, så er de frie, da der er sluttet fred med Mexiko og der skal komme nogen derfra at løse dem af. I vinter var de omtrent 100 mile fra St. Joseph og havde ikke andet at bestille end at lave sin mad ferdig og spise. De var hjemme

her en tur i vinter. I sommer var de 200 mile længer inde i landet og arbeide på mursten til fortet. Deres arbeidstid var 4 timer om dagen. Vi har ofte breve fra dem de lever alle vel. Da rummet tillader ikke mer vil jeg slutte med en inderlig kjerlig helsing til eder alle søskende venner vælgjørerere og bekjendte, og enhver anden som ønsker at høre noget fra mig. Vi lever alle vel og er vælfornøyet her, og ønsker eder alle det samme vælbefindende som vi har. Det ønskes av deres hengivne broder og ven.

Osul Nilsen Enge

Og hva jeg her har skrevet kan enhver tro af hva de vil. Jeg ved selv jeg har skrevet efter min beste overbevisning og sundt overlæg, og sagt min oprigtige mening og det som er sandt, så får skandalene sige hva de vil jeg er lige nøjd, og er glad for at være dem kvit, ønsker dem ikke her (?) skarnet (?).

O Enge

Translation, letter no. 1

Dear brothers, sisters, and friends,

I now take my pen to inform you how I live, where I have gone, and something about the country and the conditions here. I also want to tell you when and how we came here. We came to New Orleans on January 9, last year after 8 weeks' voyage from Havre when everything passed happily and well. There were very kind people onboard, both officers and seamen, they were not to be compared to the Norwegians we had been onboard with earlier, one experienced among the Americans neither beating nor swearing, which belonged to the daily events with the coarse Norwegian schooner officers.

We left New Orleans together on April 1, the following year: myself, Peder Kalvehagen, Osul Løvåsen, Anders Holte, Lars Stensvand, Ole Konnestad, Astri Østerhus, Simon Kålåsen, Torjus Hardeberg, Kristen Bjellandslien, as we were all heading for Missouri. Others in the company had gone to Wisconsin, and some had travelled in advance to seek work. We came to the township of St. Joseph on April 14, same year, which was about 1,800 miles from New Orleans, and we are now living in the vicinity. Several people told us along the way that the land around St. Joseph was one of the best places in Missouri to settle in order to get good land and a good market which I believe to be true. I raced around for 2 weeks to look for land

as most of the best land near the town was taken, either claimed or bought, though here were many people who wanted to sell their assets to go to Oregon. Going to Oregon is like going to America in Norway, and St. Joseph is the place where they cross the Missouri River to travel through Indian Territory over rocks and mountains to the mentioned place. They must also buy provisions for the journey here, which contributes a lot to the development of the town and the district.

About 7 miles south-southeast of St. Joseph I bought a claim of 160 acres land where there was built a cabin with kitchen ... and stable, very simple and in the fashion of settlers, though the cabin was one of the best homesteads I have seen here as it was tight and warm. About 40 acres were fenced in, 30 acres ploughed up, 7 to 8 sown with winter seed. In the bargain I got a good horse, 12 cows, 10 sheep, 27 pigs, great and small included. Two geese, 50 hens and in addition farming tools and household contents. 2 ... 8 chairs, a flap table, a cupboard, everything solid and well-made. A veneered mahogany chest of drawers, a living room clock, the half-share in a big plough and a smaller plough, hoes, spades, and some kitchen utensils like pots, pans etc.; for all this I paid in all 420 dollars. Moreover, I must pay to the government or the State of Missouri 200 dollars for the land, which is to be paid in the run of three consecutive years, in the month of March, whereof I have paid the first installment.

This land belongs to the State of Missouri. As here is a lot of land belonging to the mentioned state, some is given to a certain purpose, whereof mine is a part. I bought in addition 40 acres wooded land alongside the rest, of the government land wick I paid at once, as there was hardly any forest on the former. Astrid Østerhus has bought land next to mine, Osuld Løvåsen and Lars Stensvand about 1 mile away. Peder Kalvehaven about 3 miles from my place, all of them in the samme manner as I and on the same kind of land, and in between, Ole Konnestad and a certain Peder Eilersen from Tromøy Parish, have claimed near 8 acres.

Here were no Norwegians in the neighbourhood before we came, only a Dane had arrived the fall before we came. I can also tell you, dear brothers, sisters, and friends that I am well pleased about my journey so far, as the prospects are good both for myself and my family. I and my family are healthy and well, thank God, as we indeed have been since we came here. For my part, I have not been as constantly healthy for 20 years, as I have been after I came here.

Most of the other Norwegians here have also been in constant good health. Some have suffered from climate- or coldfever, but at present all are well. Peder Kalvehaven has suffered most since he was ill for the most part of last winter, but he is better now. I also want to say to you that so far I have fared far beyond expectations, as I never expected when I left Norway to acquire house and farm here in such a complete condition with livestock and kitchen utensils of every kind in abundance for the little capital I had left coming here after such a long and costly journey. That I had never expected, which you will grant me.

The land here is very fertile. Here grows what you sow in abundance, and as you know, without fertilizers, although the soil is mostly given a careless and bad treatment. For the most part one grows maize, or corn as it is called here. Wheat, hemp and oats, though the latter only for the cattle. The corn is also mostly eaten by cattle and pigs, even though it was good and wholesome nourishment for people, giving somewhat dry bread, but is very well suited to the heap of pork eaten here. Potatoes are also grown, rye, barley and many different garden crops.

It is admirable to see how many things grow here. Hemp, which is such a delicate crop in Norway, here grows to a height of 10-12 feet and more only by ploughing and sowing. Hop grows wild in such a manner that I have never seen the like in the best cultivated hop gardens in Norway. The corn grows on a stem very like a Norwegian reed, 2 inches thick, 10-12 feet tall, with a flower tassel on top, about midway on the stalk one or two cobs sprout, and on every cob there may be as many as 1,000 pips and every pip is bigger than a sweet pea, somewhat flat, so you can make up an idea how it is done. They are planted about 4 feet apart both ways, and 3-4 corns together in every place. When the corn is ripe, the stalk is cut with the cobs on with a handaxe or another suitable axe, and is placed in stacks for winterfodder, as many as are thought necessary. The rest are left standing on stubbles until winter, when it is convenient to drive around over the field with a wagon, break the cob off the stalks, load it on the wagon and drive it to a prepared cornshed where it is left until it is used, mostly for pigs and cattle because it is only a small part that people have the time to consume. It is hardly worthwhile to sell, since the price is only 10-12 cents a bushel. The stem is left until it is time to plough, then it is cut, put in a pile, and burned.

The price of wheat is usually 50 cents a bushel.

The best crop grown here for sale is hemp, because it gives many times the profit of wheat and other things one grows for sale per acre, but it demands a lot of manpower. I am quite

certain that here are better conditions than in Illinois and Wisconsin, as hemp may not well be cultivated where the soil is most favourable. Wheat does not thrive as well either.

There is a great deal of wild fruits here, of different kinds. Here are whole forests of plumtrees, and they carry quite good plums. Hazelnuts are so numerous that it is impossible to describe. In low places grass grows the height of a man on horseback's shoulder, where cattle graze. I assure you that I can neither say it, nor can it be understood by those who have not been outside Norwegian territory, how things grow here, so I will say no more about it.

Cattle are kept in the free, winter and summer, because we don't have cowsheds for cows, sheep or pigs. We have a stable for a couple of horses most in use, the rest are kept outside. Cattle soon gets ... in the winter with the help of some rye, and other things collected in the forest. Here is also an easy way to herd, you give them only some salt to get them into the habit of returning home. Milk cows are kept in that way. Calves are fenced in a garden, when the cow returns home, it is allowed to suckle a little, then the cow is milked, then lets it suckle some more, and then shuts it up again. Then the cow is left grazing until the next milking, when it almost always turns up, and thereby everything is organized and in a handy way.

Natural conditions are very favourable here in all respects. The soil is very easy to till. Ditches are not needed, there are no boulders to struggle with, you only need to fence in the piece of land you want to cultivate, and afterwards plough and sow. What they here call to cultivate is to plough with a big plough drawn by 8-10 oxen that makes a furrow 18-24 inches broad. Things don't grow well the first year, especially on the prairie or grasslands, because the grass must rot before the soil becomes friable. The soil consists of a mixture of mold and fine sand, so fine that you cannot feel it with your fingers, clay and chalk, so it is easy to till once you have broken it.

To me it really seems that this land by the creator was destined to be the home of men, which is not Norway. I should wish that the whole population in Norway were here, particularly the lowly part thereof, they did not have to lack food if only they would and could work a bit, and not so much. Here is room for everybody. I am not thinking of only this place, but around the country, though certainly if my property was cultivated and planted, it could feed the entire population in Eide Parish.

The land here is not completely flat, but somewhat hilly with long slopes, alternating with prairies and small patches of woodland between the Missouri and Platte Rivers, 39 ½ degrees northern latitude. In St. Joseph there is a good market where you can sell commodities and products nearly always for cash. It is a new town, 4 years old, in rapid development. The population counts about 1,700 people. There is a lot of commerce, many general stores, bigger than the biggest ones in Arendal, there are 3 churches, several schools, though private, and a magnificent town hall. There is also in the town water- and steam powered mills, two steam saw-mills, a third one under construction, two wool machines. Norway has no town like this of the same age and development, no matter how much corpulent citizens boast of it. Spinning and weaving machines are not installed yet, as everything is new, not everything can be finished at the same time. The oldest settlers have only been here for 10 years, spinning and weaving are done in the same way as in Norway.

Some threshing machines are already in place, but otherwise threshing is done in the following manner: one shuffles the loose earth off on a round base where the ripe corn is put, and thereafter rides round with 4 to 6 horses until the grain is trampled off. The chaff is separated with the help of a little machine operated by a crank, which there are many of. A threshing machine was recently bought not far from here at the cost of 300 dollars, with it one may thresh up to 400 bushels a day, where the grain come clean right into the sack, the straw and the chaff are separated and come out a different way.

Proper churches are not yet built here in the country, but here and there services are held in people's houses, where the sermon is decided. This summer a church will be built 3 to 4 miles from my home. Generally people are religious and Sunday is kept holy. There are several schools in the neighbourhood. Some time ago, a site was set aside for a schoolhouse alongside my property, but the building has not yet started. My daughters Gurine and Maren were in St. Joseph last winter, attending school for 3 months. I paid 5 dollars in wages for the schoolkeeper. They got board and lodging in return for working in their pauses for the landlord. Trine and Terje were also in school last autumn, 1 ½ mile from my home in the country, though it was to little avail since the teacher was not good.

The health situation here is in general good since illness seems to be less than where I came from in Norway. The air is clean and pleasant. There is good and clear drinkingwater every where here. I have several sources and springs on my property. Little rain and storm. The

usual rainy season is in May, June and July. The autumn is usually dry with scarce rain. In the same manner, the winter has also mostly fair weather with pleasant days of sunshine, though sometimes with snow and cold. Last winter we had twice 4 inches of snow, but the winter before that was the hardest, 12 inches, which was the toughest winter since people started settling here. The snow does not last long, since the sun and the air devours it in a few days. Sometimes the winter here gets very cold, I do not know if I have experienced colder weather in Norway. It freezes so that the frost sticks to your beard, but it does not last for more than 2-3 days before it gets milder again. Last winter we had such cold three times. It is almost unbelievable that the cattle survive out of doors, it helps that it is so short, although it happens that calves and hens freeze to death and the pigs freeze their ears off. The spring usually begins in April and the grass then starts to sprout. The summer heat is sometimes so strong that it is hard to do heavy work in the sun, but like the cold, it does not last long.

What is burdensome here seems to me to be minimal. Taxes and levies are insignificant, they have so far not collected anything from the Norwegians. Contributions to poor relief are not collected. Really poor people or lack of bread are unknown, which is easy to understand since the cattle are fed with roughly the same things we eat ourselves. I have not seen any beggars here, either. Flies and mosquitos are not a nuisance here, neither for people nor for animals. There are no (musseter)(?) here, no two- or four-legged beasts of prey apart from the wretched praeriewolf, which is very rare. I have not so far seen any of them. There may be some snakes here, but far from plentiful. I saw more on a morning in Norway than all I have seen in America, and they are not very harmful. Last summer I heard about a man who was bit by a rattlesnake, but he was soon healed. I know of two-legged snakes in Norway who are far more dangerous than the rattlesnake itself here. There is a certain M.P.⁶ who goes around

⁶ M.P. can possibly be identified as Morten Smith Petersen (1817-1872), one of the town's leading and most successful men. He started his career as a lawyer in Grimstad in 1839, but soon got involved in shipping interests, running his mother's ships, and extended his business into shipbuilding. His political ambitions became clear in 1850 when he was elected member of the town council, and from 1857 when he met for the first time as member of the *Storting*. He served for several periods in the national assembly, and would have met for a new term when he died in January 1872. On his initiative *Grimstad Sparebank* (savings bank) was founded in 1841, and in 1864 an institution of national and international importance, the *Veritas*, a ships' classification company, was established. An ardent spokesman for free-trade, he worked dilligently to promote trade and shipping interests. Another instance of a possible conflict between town-dwellers and the rural population in Landvik, is found in Gert Sørensen, *Hvad jeg har oplevet* (Arendal 1890):.33: in a critical comment to the meanness of the chairman of the Parish Council, Sørensen reports that Morten Smith Petersen on one occasion said that the chairman ("ordfører"), Mr. Terje Terjesen Stalleland, was one of the dumbest peasants he had ever met. It is also interesting to note Mathias Gundersen's recollections on his own business and the general financial situation in Grimstad in the 1840s; see 6.20. Morten Smith Petersen is often referred to as Morten Pettersen, and Mr. Gundersen's critical and bitter comments upon his "friend's" dealings at his own bankruptcy make a possible parallel to Osul Enge's remarks about M.P.

scowling down in Grimstad. I would really implore everybody to be on their guard, because their bit is more dangerous than that of the rattlesnake here. There are good roads everywhere, so one may drive a carriage to every man's door. Good laws in protection of freedom and rights. One hears little of summons and processes. If there is a judicial process once in a while, it is soon settled, one does not waste your time here, and one does not use so much money on public authorities as in Norway to get one's rights.

Those who want to know something in addition about America in general, should consult Gasmand's and Reiersen's descriptions, as I find their reports practically in all respects in accordance with the truth, in everything that I so far have experienced, so I assure you that I have often been surprised at reading in Reiersen's guide how a man in such a short time has been able to collect that much information. It goes without saying that a description which covers the whole, cannot take into account any single detail since here are different laws and systems in every state and county. It is useful for those who are in possession of a guidebook to bring it with them on their journey to America, as there are different instructions that may prove useful after one has arrived here.

I only disagree with Reieresen in one respect, travelling via New Orleans. On the other hand, I agree with Gasmand in going via New York, since I believe that must be straighter and better. Then you can cross the North Sea in the spring, and have the whole summer to travel. You do not come that far south, so the heat is not so strong and the climate not as variable as in New Orleans. Going via New York or New Orleans, one may both ways come to Missouri or any other place in the Mississippi Valley. It is true that the journey upstate will be more costly, but I believe in general that it is cheaper to travel from Norway to New York than to New Orleans, so the difference is not great. In any case, I want to warn those who are heading for New Orleans against going at a time which forces them to stop for a time in New Orleans, since by stopping there for a while, one is subject to loss of money and illness, as most newcomers there are attacked with a violently upset stomach or diarrhoea caused by the water for those who are not used to it, which is sometimes fatal. To earn money there is also out of the question, since the immigration increases so much every year that one fourth cannot find work, and the newcomer without skills in the language is always left behind. Neither do I find it useful for those travelling to America to bring with them anything else than is needed on the journey because you can buy anything here, and almost everything cheaper than in Norway,

and even solid and well-made. Some light tools might prove useful, and are often handy on the journey.

Anders Holte has asked me, when writing to you, to give his respects, because he as well as Lars Håbesland, Kristian Stensvand, Cristen Bjellandslien, and Torjus Hardeberg have volunteered as soldiers, to make a journey into Indian Territory on the Oregon Trail above St. Joseph. They are 5 companies together. The purpose of the expedition is to build a fort or a fortification against the Indians for those who are travelling to Oregon since it has happened that immigrants have been attacked on the way. Those soldiers do fairly well, as everybody else in American service, they suffer from neither hunger nor thirst, nor are they beaten in the Norwegian manner, but they are given the best provisions of every kind that are found in the country, and in such an abundance that they hardly can eat it all, yes, even soap to wash themselves with. Fresh meat of select young oxen twice a week, and yet the neck is not given them, but cut off at the shoulder. Their wages are about 30 dollars a month and 60 acers of land when they return. But they must keep their own horse (those who are riders). They have now been there about a year, and are expected to be back in 2 months, then they are free, because there is peace with Mexico, and somebody will come from there to relieve them. Last winter they were about 100 miles from St. Joseph and had nothing to do but to make their food and eat it. They came home on a trip last winter. This summer they were 200 miles further inland and worked on bricks for the fort. Their working hours are 4 hours a day. We often have letters from them, they are all well.

Lack of space does not allow me to write more, and I shall finish with deep and heartfelt greetings to you all, brothers, sisters, friends, well-doers, and acquaintances, and anybody else who wishes to hear something from me. We are all well and well pleased here, and wish you all the same well-being as we enjoy. I wish you this, your devoted brother and friend.

Osul Nilsen Enge

Concerning what I have written here, everybody may think what they like. I know that I have written to the best of my conviction and sound deliberation, and what is true, then the scandalmongers may say what they like, I do not care, and I am glad to be rid of them, and do not wish them here (?)

O Enge

Letter no. 2**From: Osul Nelson Enge****To: Nils Pedersen Igland (his nephew)****Place/ date: Buchanan County in Missouri, January 3, 1854**

Kjære brodersøn N. Pedersen!

Deres ærede som og kjærkomne skrivelse af 18de juli f. år modtog jeg for 3 måneder siden hvorfor jeg skylder dig gjengjeld. Jeg får nu tage pennen (dog meget for sent) for at tilmelde eder om min og fleres stilling her, om det kan lykkes mig at gjøre mig forståelig for dem fjærnt boende i håb og ønske om at det må træffe eder i god befinnende og fornøylig stilling.

Jeg vil først fortælle noget om min egen stilling for nærværende. Jeg med kone og barn lever alle væl med helsen og væl tilfredse her med et sorgfri udkomme hvorfor vi er Gud takskyldige. Min husholdning er ikke stor for nærværende, jeg har alene 3 barn hjemme: Terje, Nils Gustav og Gusta. Den sidste er fød her den 15de may 1850. De er alle raske og friske. Da (?) af vore piger er alle gifte, leve også alle væl, har helsen for nærværende. Jeg vil fortæle noget om enhver af dem, enskjøndt det vil blive en gjentagelse af hva du ved tilforn, som og det meste af vad jeg kan sige vel være. Aase og hendes mand bor for nærværende i det ene værelse af mit hus, da vi har leiet derav eget hus skolehus for 6 måneder. De har haft 3 pigebarn hvorav den eldste er død, de andre 2 ere raske. Gurine og hendes man lever væl, går fræmad, har 2 børn, en pige og en søn, og vil snart få have en mer i talet. Maren og Trine er gift med 2 brødre, amerikanere af navn Charles og Samuel Hardy. De have hver sin søn, de boer en engelsk mil fra oss hvor de have gårde og leve væl. Alle vores barn lever rundt om oss, det længste kun omtrent en halfjærding⁷ væi fra oss. Vi have nu fåt 7 barn og 6 barnebarn i live, alle i vor nærhed.

Hva mig selv angår så er jeg bra frisk og stærk for nærværende, som jeg for det meste har været siden jeg kom her til. Jeg har et par ganger i de senere år været jæmsøkt af min gamle brøstsygelighed, men det er gået tålig fort af igjen. Gunnil er også bare sterk endnu som hun altid har været, dog er vi begge begyndt at blive gamle. Jeg for min del må bruge breller, da mit syn er aftaget i den grad at jeg foruden dem ikke formår at læse det ringeste i bog. For øvrig troer jeg her må være et sundt stæd hvor vi boer, da ingen af vor famelie har havt det

⁷ Fjærding = 2 ½ km.

ringeste af febersygdom, ikke engang koldfeber som er så almindelig blant nybyggere. Maren og Trine har af og til haft koldfeber siden de kom ut fra hjemmet.

Jeg må også fortælle noget om min stilling og hva jeg have udrættet siden jeg kom her til. Det er i det hele ikke noget stort. Jeg har bygget eller ladet bygge et nyt hus, tømret på Norsk fason af egetømmer bestående af 2 værelser og en sval i mellem, enkelt højde. Dog så der kan blive tålelige overværelser, men dem er næsten ikke værdt at omtale. Jeg har bygd over $\frac{1}{4}$ mil fra det sted de gamle huser stod da jeg kom her.

Jeg har utvidet min ... det her kaldes, eller indgjerding så jeg har omtrændt 70 æker indhægnet, dog omtrent 6 æker ubrudt. De produkter vi hovedsagelig driver er hamp, corn eller mais, vede, havre og poteter, hvilket alt i almindelighed stod godt sidste år, undtagen vede var mislig da den til dels frøs bort forige vinter. For min del kan jeg sige det var alt godt hva jeg hadde såed, dog jeg havde ikke ræt meget af nogen af delene thi jeg havde leiet bort omtrent 20 æker til en Norsk famelie fra Holt sogn som bor hær tæt med oss. Forrige år eller 1852 års hamp solgte jeg afvigte høst for 250 dollar, lidt over 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ton. Det samme års vede solgte jeg på samme tid for 75 cent bushel men jeg fik ikke fuldt 100 bushel. Hvis jeg havde den nu var den værd 1 dol. bus. Det sidste års vede har jeg endnu ikke tersket, det er og knapt 100 bus. Jeg har omtrent 200 bus. havre heller ikke tersket. Den gjælder for nærværende rundt 25 cent pr bu. Jeg har væntet på en terskemaskin som her er flere af i omegnen, men her er endnu ingen kommen. Det sidste års hamp ligger nu ude for at ... hvis den vil slå til som jeg formoder vil jeg omtrændt få 3 ton og prisen har nærværende tegnet til at bli god. Der bydes nu 100 dol. pr ton. Hampeprisen er ellers meget variabel, fra 60 til 100 dollar pr ton som er 2000 pund efter Norsk vægt.

Jeg vil fortæle noget om omgangsmåden med hamp, da jeg tror det vil interesere dem der ikke have hørt derom tilforn. Såtiden er sidst i april eller først i mai. Jorden pløyes væl og harves slædt, besåes med 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ bus. sæd pr æker på samme måde som man sår byg og harves læt ned. Sidst eller mit af august skjærer man den med en dertil indrættet sigd. En man der er vandt til det skjærer fra $\frac{1}{2}$ til $\frac{2}{3}$ æker om dagen. Den skjæres i skårer så brede at de kan lægge hampen ned efter sig på tværs og sprædet jævnt, hvor den blir liggende til den er væl tør. Den tages da og sættes i runde ræsinger på ageren som her kalles siuk, hvor den bliver stående til november, at sommerheden er over, man spræder den derpå ud igjen på det samme stæd den er voxet på for at fårs (?). Det beror på værrets beskaffenhed hvor længe den passer at ligge.

Når den er fåd (?), bliver den sat opp i siuk igjen som forhen. Man kommer nu med Brøden⁸ (?) når veiret er tørt og sætter ved siden av siuken for at brøde, når været er fuktig lader det sig ikke gjøre. Brøding er almindelig forsagt arbeide og prisen er 1 dol for 100 mil (?) eller 112 pund der svarer til 100 pund Norsk. Det regnes for en dags arbeide. Her er også dem der brøder omkring 200 pund om dagen og derover når det er ræt tørt væir og god hamp. Dette synest nest urimelig for den der ikke kjender til det, men Terje min søn brøder over 100 pund om dagen de bedste dager sist afvigte vinter, han er kuns en liden gut. Jeg er selv ingen hamp brøder.

Dette bliver formeget hampprat jeg må se at fortælle om noget andet. Jeg har ikke meget af hæst og kreatur. Jeg har kuns en gammel mærg og 16 stk. hornkveg med småt og stort hvorav er 2 par gode kjøre oxer. Krætur er dyrt her nu. Jeg kjøpte en koe med liden kalv afvigte høst for 30 dol. Jeg solgte en meget liden slagtekoe for 20 dol. Svin har jeg heller ikke mange kuns 16 st.

Jeg slagted ej meget før jul. Penge har jeg heller ikke mer end så jeg kan siges at greie mig selv. Jeg har rigtig nok lånt du 50 dol. Da jeg således har berørt det hovedsagelige af min nærværende forfatning, dog meget overfladisk, så det vil blive hart at udfinde meningen deraf.

Jeg går nu over til at omtale en del af de andre Norske her, om det kan lykkes mig at gjøre mig forståelig. Broder Ole Lien lever væl med sine 3 barn, har alle helsen for nærværende. Han har en god gård og udsigt til et godt udkomme, men han sender krukken noget for ofte til byen. Kirsten Pedersdatter tjener i St. Joseph for 5 dollar månen, lever væl har helsen og der siges hun har en god tjenst. Anders Holte lever også væl, har helsen med alle sine. Han er gift som du væl ved med Anne Iversdatter Lunden. De har ingen barn fåt endnu. Han har og en god eiendom, vel en del gjæld men er i god opkomst. Osul Løvåsen lever også væl og har helsen med fameli, undtagen Gunborg er ikke aldeles frisk. Han har to sønner i Kalifornien Anders og Gunder jeg tror de gjør det godt der. Anders har sendt hjem 800 dol. siden han kom derover, han siger i sin siste skrivelse at han muliens snart kommer hjem dog han ved det ikke bestemt endnu. Gunder har man hørt meget lidet til siden han reiste. Da han har været nord oppe i fjældene på grændsen af Oregon hvor der er liden postgang. Rygtet fortæller nu efter

⁸ In a letter from Linguistic Institute, University of Oslo, Dagfinn Worren remarks that “brøding” (n.), “brøde” (v.), and “brøder” (n.) undoubtedly are examples of dialect use. The standard Norwegian word should be “bryting”/ “bryta”/ “bryter”, and has a well-documented reference to working with hemp or flax. A common reading of the word would be “breaking the glumes of hemp or flax”. (*Norsk Ordbok*, <http://2014.uio.no>)

en som er kommet hjem der ifra at han nu skal være på hjemræisen og skal ha gjort det svært godt. Nils Guttormsen lever også væl med famelie. Han har nu 2 barn da han har fået sig en søn her i Amerika. Han i afvigte høst fløtta de og ombygde sine huser. Han er i god fremadgående. Afvigte vinter kom 2 norske her hjem fra Californien nemmelig Nils Pedersen Dalholt og Johannes Larsen Stensvand, den første med 2000 dol. den sidste med 1000 dol. For øvrig er rygtene nu fra Californien ikke meget favoriable, da guldet der bliver vanskelig at få fat på, så den der vil have sekken fuld må nu til Ny Holland der det skal være plenti av det. Gamle Berte Gjennestad er for tiden hos Nils Gutormsen, hun har helsen, er rask endnu. Maren Ørteland er virkelig gift, med Håver Larsen Stensvand. De have gård 40 ækers land og god udsigt til udkomme. Hans er hos dem og rask. Maren var meget sygelig sidst sommer og høst men nu er hun brav igjen. Berte Gundersdatter Stene er gift med Lars Nilsen Aalien. De har 80 ækers land hær tæt ved min eiendom, og god udsigt til levevæi. Gro Gerbjørnsdatter der var i følge med Ole Lien her over, blev gift afvigte høst med en fra Skotten i Fjære sogn. Han har sit ophold i Viskonsin. De skal have været forlovet siden de reiste over til Amerika, da de var på et fartøy. Han og en kammerat kom til St. Joseph hvor Gro tjente, blev viet og reiste til Viskonsin. Rygtet sier ikke det bedste om gutten. Det var sønd for Gro skulle hun ikke komme vel, da det var en rask pige.

(avsenders navn ikke bevart)

Translation, letter no. 2

Dear nephew N. Pedersen,

Your honourable as well as welcome letter of July 18, last year, I received 3 months ago, and I owe you one in return. I shall now take my pen (though far too late) in order to communicate you about mine and others' situation here, if I can succeed in making myself understood for people far away, hoping and wishing that it may reach you in well-being and favourable situation.

I first want to tell you something about my present situation. I live well with my wife and children, they are all in good health, and we are well satisfied with a carefree livelihood whereof we are grateful to God. My household is not big for the moment; I have only 3 children at home: Terje, Nils Gustav, and Gusta. The latter was born here on May 15, 1850.

They are all well and healthy. As ... of our girls are all married, they live well, and in good health. I shall tell you something about every one of them, though it will be a repetition of what you already know, as is also the case with almost everything I can tell. Aase⁹ and her husband live at present in one of the rooms in my house, because we have put up for rent for 6 months part of our house as a school house. They have had 3 girls, the eldest is dead, the others are well. Gurine¹⁰ and her husband live well, are in progress, have 2 children, a girl and a son, and will soon have one more. Maren and Trine¹¹ are married to 2 brothers, Americans by the names of Charles and Samuel Hardy. They each have a son, and live an English mile from us, where they have a farm and live well. All our children live well around us, at most a "halfjærding"¹² distance from us. We have now 7 children and 6 grandchildren alive, all of them in the neighbourhood.

As far as I am concerned, I am fairly well and strong at present, as I have been since I came here. I have on a couple of occasions in the last years been haunted by my old chest ailment, but it has gone away rather quickly. Gunnil¹³ is also strong yet, as she always has been, but we are both getting old. For my part I have to use glasses, as my eyesight is so diminished that I cannot read a thing in a book without them. Besides, it think this must be a healthy place to live, as none in our family have suffered from the slightest fever, not even coldfever which is so common among settlers. Maren and Trine have once in a while caught coldfever since they left home.

I must also tell something about my position, and what I have achieved since I came here. On the whole it is not much. I have built, or let build, a new house, constructed in the Norwegian way with oak timber, consisting of 2 rooms and a gallery in between, one storey. Though in such a way that it is possible to have fairly good upper rooms, but they are not yet finished. I also have some other insignificant houses which are hardly worth mentioning. I have built on a site ¼ mile from the old houses which stood here when I arrived.

I have extended my ... as it is called here, or enclosure, so that I have about 70 acres fenced in, though about 6 acres unploughed. In the main we produce hemp, corn or maize, wheat,

⁹ His daughter (1827-1903); married to Hans (Arnesen) Nilsen in New Orleans – a seaman from Kristiansand.

¹⁰ His daughter (1829-1907).

¹¹ His daughters; Maren (1831-1902), Trine (1834-1867).

¹² "Fjærding" = 2.5 km; "halfjærding" = 1.25 km.

¹³ His wife Gunnhild, (1804?-1867).

oats, and potatoes, all of which stood well last year, except the wheat which was miserable because it froze away last winter. For my part I can say that all that I had sown was well, though I had not much of any produce since I had let about 20 acres to a Norwegian family from Holt Parish who live near us. The hemp of last year, or 1852, I sold last autumn for 250 dollars, a little more than 2 ½ tons. The wheat of the same year I sold at the same time for 75 cents a bushel, but had a little less than 100 bushels. If I had it now, it was worth 1 dollar a bushel. I have not yet threshed last year's wheat, it is barely 100 bushels. I have about 200 bushels of oats, not yet threshed. It goes at present for about 25 cents a bushel. I have been waiting for a threshing machine which there are several of in the neighbourhood, but none has come so far. Last year's hemp is lying outside to ... if it meets my expectations, I shall get about 3 tons, and the price has so far been promising. The bid is at 100 dollars a ton. The price of hemp varies a lot, from 60 to 100 dollars a ton, which is 2,000 pounds in Norwegian weight.

I shall tell something of the way we produce hemp, as I think it might interest those who have not heard about it before. We plant the seeds in April or the beginning of May. The soil is ploughed well and harrowed even, is sown with 1 ½ bushel of seed an acre in the same way as one sows barley, and harrowed lightly. Towards the end or the middle of August one cuts it with a fitted sickle. One man who is used to it, cuts from ½ to ⅔ acre a day. It is cut in swaths so wide that they can put the hemp down crosswise, and spread it evenly, and it is left there until it is well dry. Then it is collected, and put in round stacks in the field, which are here called "siuk"(?), and left until November when the summer heat is over, then spread again in the same place it has grown to "fårs"(?). It depends on the weather how long it is left lying there. When it is "fåd"(?), it is placed in "siuk"(?) again like before. Then one brings in the breaking¹⁴, when the weather is dry and works beside the "siuk"(?) to break, when it is wet it cannot be done. Breaking is common, simple work and the wages are 1 dollar per 100 mil (?), or 112 pounds which is equal to 100 pounds in Norway. This is reckoned to be a day's work. Here are also those who break about 200 pounds a day, and more when the weather is fairly dry and the hemp is good. This may seem improbable for those who are not acquainted with this, but my son Terje breaks more than 100 pounds a day on his best days last winter, and he is just a little boy. I am not a hemp breaker myself.

¹⁴ See note to Norwegian text, *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 2 (break = crush/ separate the glumes of hemp or flax).

This is too much about hemp, I have to tell something else. I do not have many horses or cattle. I have only an old mare and 16 horned cattle large and small included, of those 2 pairs are good for driving. Cattle are expensive here now. I bought a cow with a little calf last fall for 30 dollars. I sold a very small fatstock for 20 dollars. I do not have many pigs, either, only 16.

I did not slaughter much before Christmas. I do not have more money than is needed to make both ends meet. To be sure, I have loaned 50 dollars. I now have touched upon the main sides of my situation, though very superficially, it will be hard to find the meaning in it.

I now pass on to tell about some of the other Norwegians who live here, if I may succeed in making myself understood. My brother Ole Lien¹⁵ lives well with his 3 children, they are all in good health. He has a good farm and prospects of a good income, but he sends the jar a bit too often to town. Kirsten Pedersdatter¹⁶ is serving in St. Joseph for 5 dollars a month, lives well, is in good health, and they say she has a good position. Anders Holte also lives well, and they all send their greetings. As you may know, he is married to Anne Iversdatter Lunden. They have no children so far. He too has a good property, probably some debts, but in progress. Osul Løvåsen also lives well, and is in good health sends with his family, except Gunborg¹⁷ who is not quite well. He has 2 sons in California, Anders and Gunder, I think they are doing well there. Anders has sent home 800 dollars after he came over, he says in his last letter that he possibly will be home soon, though he has not decided yet. One has heard very little from Gunder since he left, because he has been up north in the mountains on the border to Oregon where there is scanty mail delivery. He may be, according to a rumour spread by someone who has just returned from there, on his way home, having done very well.

Nils Gutormsen¹⁸ also lives well with his family. He has now 2 children, having had a son here in America. He moved house last autumn, and rebuilt his houses. He is in good progress. Last winter 2 Norwegians came home from California, namely Nils Pedersen Dalholt¹⁹ and Johannes Larsen Stensvand²⁰, the former with 2,000 dollars, the latter with 1,000 dollars. Moreover, rumours from California are not very favourable, since the gold has become

¹⁵ Emigrated in 1850.

¹⁶ His step-daughter.

¹⁷ His daughter (1832-1894); she was married to Osul Mathias Dannevig; six children.

¹⁸ Emigrated in 1850.

¹⁹ Peder Kalvehaven's son.

²⁰ Lars Haaversen Stensvand's son.

difficult to get at, so those who want to fill their sacks must go to New Holland where they say it is plentyful. Old Berte Gjennestad is at present with Nils Gutormsen, she is in good health, and is healthy yet. Maren Ørteland is really married, with Håver Larsen Stensvand. They have a 40- acre-farm, and good prospects of an income. Hans is with them, and is well. Maren was very ill last summer and fall, but now she is well again. Berte Gundersdatter Stene is married to Lars Nilsen Aalien. They have 80 acres of land close to my property, and good prospects of an income. Gro Gerbjørnsdatter, who came over with Ole Lien, was married last autumn to somebody from Skotten in Fjære Parish. He is staying in Wisconsin. They are said to have been engaged after they left for America, when they were on a ship. He and a friend came to St. Joseph where Gro had service, got married and left for Wisconsin. Rumours are not favourable about the boy. It was a pity that she did not do well, because she was a clever girl.

(sender's name is not preserved)

Letter no. 3

From: Osul Nilson Enge

To: Nils Pedersen Igland and others

Place/ date: Doniphan County in Kansas, July 8, 1867

Kjære brorsøn med flere

Jeg har den tunge begivenhed at tilmelde at min elskede kone hensov i døden den 9de juni sistleden efter 4 måneders sygdom. Sygdommen var for en stor del av tiden ikke så meget smertelig, dog hardnakket. Vi gjorde alt mulig for hendes helbredelse, men alt forgjæves. Vi havde 3 doktorer, og 4 ganger 2 av gangen, alt uden virkning udentagen at lindre smertene, og alt hvad vi gjorde hafde Gud vilje at ske og døden var den bedste doktor hvormed hun var vel fornøyd. Det er vel urigtig for mig at klage, men heller være taknemmelig til den alvise styrer der har ladet os leve lykkelig isammen i en 40 år og med fortrøstning om at igjen samles i en bedre verden. Hun efterlod nu i live 7 børn og 25 børnebørn som alle lever vel og boer her i nabolaget.

Hendes sygdom bestod i indvolden svulder og sår i maven, og hun i den sidste tid brækkede op en mængde materie af sådant. Hendes hoved og bryst var aldeles friskt indtil det siste

åndedræt. Det var og som en hendelse at vor præst kom her dagen før hendes begravelse (thi han boer temmelig langt her ifra) og stoppet for at bivåne begravelsen. Han gjorde en lang rørende tale, for en stor forsamling af mennesker, som var her tilstede for at vise hende den siste tjeneste. Hun var en 62 ½ år gammel og havde seet verden i forskellig skikkelse både ond og god.

Terje, Nils og Gusta vor yngste datter er hjemme hos mig, og vi alle lever væl Gud ske tak med helsen, dog det er meget langsomt og synest som en væg var ude i huset. Dog vi må være fornøyde med en almægtiges villie, og være rede til at følge når han kalder, og med glæde forlade denne jordiske hytte for med Guds nåde å igjen samles i de hriges boliger. Jeg er nu 65 år gammel og har været svagelig i mange år så jeg formoder mine leveår er ei mange tilbage. Dog jeg er bra frisk for nærværende når jeg lidet eller intet bestiller. Jeg har Gud ske lov nok at leve af, hvis Gud forunde mig lykke som hidentil. Jeg eier en hel del land, og en 1000 daler penger på rente. Jeg kjøpte for over et år siden 320 ækers eller 2/4 del seksjoner land som skulde være for en Ole Tjæmsland, hvorfor betalte jeg 2900 dollar. Han skulde komme her i sommer, men har ikke set noget til ham endnu, men hvis han ei kommer her at løse landet så kan jeg sælge det til andre med fordel. Det er extra godt land med hus og en del dørket derpå.

Jeg vil nu fortælle noget om min gård hvor jeg bor. Jeg har en 100 ækers opdyrket og indhegnet med hva vi her kaller et tålig godt hus, opført av bindingsverk med murstensmur mellom bindingsverket, med 1 ½ etage høyde, 3 underværelser og sval, og 2 lofter ovenpå. Ved kjøkkendøren har jeg brønd, hvor er en pomp, så vi drager vand meget lætvindt. Udhuser har vi ikke meget af i almindelighed. Jeg har en stald til rom for 4 hester med et par små sideskur for en 3 kyr og nogle sauer, en liden smidie, et røghus og et hus til hønsene, det er alt. Når man skal begønde i et nyt land hvor det ingenting er untagen den rå natur, kan man ei række meget i et half snes år som vi har været her. Jeg har rektignok en 300 frukttrær plantet som nu en del er begyndt at bære frukt. Jeg havde plantet en del i Missouri som just var begyndt at bære frukt da vi fløttede der ifra. Som gårdsredskaper har vi en maskin til at kutte eller skjære hamp, vede, bøg, havre og høi. Den bliver trokken med ifra 2 til 6 heste, 2 til at slå høi 4 til vede bøg og havre 6 til hamp. Vi har også en rive som man med hest rager og muer høit, der går ræt fort og lætvindt. Vi har også et slags plog til at pløye eller rense ugresset ud af maiskornet med. Den er lig en tohjuls vogn og trækkes af to hester og en mand sidder i et sæde og kjører som i plaser. Der spares en mand og så meget lettere end som på

den gamle måden hvor vi havde en hest og en plog der en mand skulde gå bagefter at styre. Her er mange slags opfindelser til arbejdsbesparelser der er meget fordelagtige her, som arbejdslønnen er så høj.

Forrige år brugte Terje og Nils gården for mig (da jeg ei kan gjøre sønderlig ved den mig selv) gav mig en part af avlingen til at leve af, og de fortjente ræt gode penge. Iår bruger Nils den alene formedels Terje arbejder på sin egen (som ligger ved siden af min) ved at brække og inhægne hele $\frac{1}{4}$ del sexion da han hafde alene 40 ækers i cultur tilforn. Iår vil ikke Nils tjene meget, heller ikke andre farmere her i en svær omkreds da vi er hjemstøgt af jeg tror de egøpiske grasshopper. De kom her afvigte høst i september flyvende i sådan mængde at de på mange steder døttede (?) jorden, dog de dentid ikke gjorde nogen betydelig skade da vede byg og havre var indhøstet untagen vintervede som var såed. De åd den af så mange gange til den døde aldeles ud. Men de lagde sin yngel i jorden i nottingvis (?), et slags små æg, og ved vinterens komme døde dem alle ud. Nu da forårsvarmen begønte begønte eggene at klække ud, græshopper kom frem i millionvis. I begøndelsen var de små og gjorde ikke sønderlig skade, men efter som de voxte tiltog grådigheden, så de har ruinert hamp vede og byg, havre liger de ikke så væl, heller ei maiskorntet har de sønderlig skadet endnu. De flæste af dem er nu voxne og en stor del af dem flyver af. Her siges fra andre steder hvor de har været tilforn at når de bliver voxne og får vinger, de trækker af i store skarer for et andet sted at udøve sin ødeleggelse.

De Norske heromkring som og i Missouri så vidt mig bekjendt lever all væl og har helsen undtagen Nils Gutormsen, sist jeg hørte fra ham var han noget sygelig af et tilfælde af hævelse i hovedet eller ansigtet. Gusta vor datter er heller ei så aldeles frisk da hun har et tilfælde af kjertelsvaghed runt halsen. Det er vist meget jeg burde skrive om men jeg er så lidet skikket til at skrive og vel meget vilde blive en gjentagelse hva dere af andre har hørt, så vil jeg overlade det til de mer kompetente der ser tingene i det rette lys. Vi har ventet så længe at se nogle at vore slægtninger fra vort gamle fødeland. Vi hørte for et års tid siden at du Even vilde sende et par af dine herover for at besøge oss, men de er ikke kommet endnu. Det vilde have været en sand fornøyelse at have set dem her. Ja og så interesandt for dem at se med deres egne øyne hvad de har hørt så meget om tilforn, og vil finde mange ting annerledes end det har været skældret i så far en afstand. Men måske de haver ikke mod nok til at gå så langt fra fødestædet. Jeg indlagt sender 2 af mine og 2 af min kjære kones potrætter som vi har taget for over et år siden for at sende eder, men de blive så lidet lignende at vi besluttet ikke at

sende dem, men vilde få nogle bedre når vi fik anledning dertil, som aldså afbrødes af omstændighedene. Jeg sagde om disse at de lignet mer døde end levende mennesker, og således passer hendes vel da de ligner hende meget på hendes dødsleie.

Kjære Nils jeg sender dette til dig i håb om at du vil gjøre vores sorg og omstændigheder kjendt for alle vores slægtninger og pårørende derover. Det var min pligt at sende eder enhver et brev, men som sagt jeg kan lidet skrive og får bede mig undskyldt. Giv et av min kones potrætter til hendes søstre hvis de lever. De øvrige kan du gjøre brug af efter eget godtbefindende. Til slutning hilser jeg eder alle slægtninge og pårørende alle ingen undtagen, og nedbeder Herrens velsignelse og nåde, at den må vile over eder alle til siste åndedræt – Farvel.

Fra eders meget forbundne Osul Nilson

Jeg inlægger også et potret af min søn Nils.

Min adresse er Osul Nilson Troy Postofis Doniphan County Kansas

Translation, letter no. 3

Dear nephew and others

I have the heavy duty to inform you that my beloved wife passed away on last June 9, after 4 months' illness. For a large part of the time, the illness was not so much painful, but persistent. We did everything for her recovery, but all in vain. We had 3 doctors, and four times 2 at the same time, all without avail except to lessen the pains, and whatever we did, it was God's will, and death was her best doctor, wherewith she was well pleased. It is not right for me to complain, but rather be thankful for the almighty ruler who has let us live happily together for 40 years, and with confidence that we shall be gathered in a better world. She left alive 7 children and 25 grandchildren who all live well in the neighbourhood.

Her illness consisted in tumours in the intestines and gastric ulcer, and lately she vomited a lot of such pus. Her head and chest were perfectly healthy until her last breath. It was also an

event that our minister came here the day before her funeral (because he lives a fairly long distance from here), and halted to attend the funeral. He made a long and touching speech, to a multitude of people, who were present to show her the last honours. She was 62 ½ years old, and had seen the world in different forms, both evil and good.

Terje, Nils, and Gusta our youngest daughter are at home with me, and we all live well, thank God, and are in good health, though it is very quiet and like a wall has fallen out in the house. However, we must be satisfied at the will of the allmighty, and be ready to follow when he calls, and gladly leave this earthly abode and by the grace of God to gather in the houses of the blessed. I am now 65 years old, and have been frail for many years, so I suspect I do not have many years left to live. However, I am fairly well at the moment, as long as I do little or nothing. I have, thank God, enough to live on, God granting me continued happiness. I own a good deal of land, and about 1000 dollars with interest. More than a year ago I bought 320 acres or 2/4 sectioned land, meant to be for a certain Ole Tjæmsland, for which I paid 2,900 dollars. He was supposed to come here last summer, but I have not seen him yet, but if he does not come here to claim the land, I may sell it to others with a profit. It is extra good land with a house and some cultivated areas in addition.

I now want to tell something about the farm I live on. I have about 100 acres of cultivated land, fenced in, and with what we call here a fairly good house, half-timbered with bricks, 1 ½ stories, 3 rooms downstairs with a porch, and 2 attics upstairs. By the kitchen door I have a well, where there is a pump, and we draw water very easily. In general we do not have many outhouses. I have a stable with room for 4 horses, with a couple of sidesheds for 3 cows and some sheep, a little smithy, a smokehouse, and a hen house, that is all. When one is about to start a life in a new land where there is nothing except raw nature, one cannot do much during the half-score years we have been here. Truly, I have planted about 300 fruit trees, which are now beginning to bear fruit. I had planted some in Missouri, which were just beginning to bear fruit when we moved house. For farm tools we have a machine to cut or shear hemp, wheat, barley, oats, and hay. It is drawn by 2 to 6 horses, 2 to mow the hay, 4 for wheat, barley and oats, 6 for hemp. We also have a rake, which is drawn by a horse and rakes and mows the hay quickly and easily. We also have a kind of plough, used to plough or winnow the corn. It looks like a two-wheeled carriage and is drawn by 2 horses, with a man seated in it, driving at ease. We save one man, and it is so much easier than in the old way when we had

a horse and a plough and a man to go behind and steer it. Here are many work-saving inventions which are very profitable since the wages are so high.

Last year Terje and Nils²¹ ran the farm for me (because I can do very little about it myself), and gave me a part of the crop to live on, and they deserved good payment. This year, Nils is running it alone, while Terje is working on his own farm (which is next to mine), ploughing and fencing a whole ¼ section, as he had only 40 acres of cultivated land earlier. This year Nils will not make much money, neither shall other farmers in a wide circle as we are plagued by what I believe are Egyptian grasshoppers. They came here last autumn, flying in such a multitude that they in some parts covered the earth, but they did not do much harm then because the wheat, barley, and oats had been harvested, except winter wheat which had recently been sown. They ate it so many times that it died out completely. But they placed their brood in the earth in heaps (?), a kind of little eggs, and at the coming of winter they all died. When the heat of spring came, the eggs started to hatch, and grasshoppers appeared by the million. In the beginning they were small, and did not do much harm, but as they grew, their greed increased, so they have ruined the hemp, wheat, and barley, they do not like oats that well, nor have they damaged the corn considerably yet. Most of them are now full grown, and a great part of them fly off. From other places where they have been, we hear that when they are grown and get wings, they migrate in multitudes to do their damage elsewhere.

The Norwegians in the vicinity, as well as in Missouri, to my knowledge all live well and are in good health, except Nils Gutormsen, who last time I heard from him, suffered from a case of swollen head or face. Gusta, our daughter, is not so healthy, either, as she suffers from a case of gland ailment round the neck. There are many things I should have written about, but I am so little fit to write, and a lot would be a repetition of things you have heard from others, so I leave it to those more competent to put the things in their right perspective. We have waited so long to see some of our relatives from our old home country. We heard about a year ago that you, Even, would send a couple of your family over here to visit us, but they have not come so far. It would have been a true pleasure to see them. And so interesting for them to see with their own eyes what they have heard so much about, and would find many things different compared to the way they have been described over such a great distance. But perhaps they do not have the courage to venture so far from their birthplace. Enclosed, I send

²¹ His sons; Terje (1839-1919), Nels (1846-1929).

you 2 of mine and 2 of my dear wife's portraits, taken over a year ago to send to you, but they lacked any resemblance, and we decided not to send them, but would get better ones once the occasion rose, which was cut off by circumstances. I said about these pictures that they resembled more dead than living people, and therefore her picture is appropriate as it resembles her on her deathbed.

Dear Nils, I send this to you in the hope that you will make our grief and circumstances known to all our relatives and next of kin over there. It was my duty to send you all a letter, but as I have mentioned, I am little fit to write, and I apologize. Give one of my wife's portraits to her sisters if they are alive. The rest you may use at your own discretion. Finally, I send my greetings to all relatives and next of kin, nobody forgotten, and pray that the Lord's blessing and grace be upon you all until your last breath – Farewell.

From yours truly Osul Nilson

I enclose a portrait of my son Nils.

My address is Osul Nilson Troy Postofis Doniphan County Kansas

Letter no. 4

From: Osul Nilson Enge

To: Nils Pedersen Igland (his nephew)

Place/ date: a note, following a parcel with pictures; probably written between 1866 and 1869.

Kjære Nels!

Jeg sender dig her vedlagt 7 Portrætter mit eget der var taget sist afvigte Sommer og ligner mig taalelig godt. Min Kones var taget 2 Aar før hendes Død og igjengivet efter et i en Bok (?) og ligner godt i hendes sundheds dage. Terjes, Nelses og Gustas er noksaa vel truffen. Saa kommer Maren Johane med sin mand og hele Børneflokket på 2 Portrætter hendes Mands navn er Charles Stewart Hardy. Du vil finde navnene på bagsiden af Portræterne, og Børnene vil Du see et number over Hovederne som begynder ifra den eldste til den yngste 7 i talet der vil correspondere med navnene på Bagsiden. – den eldste Datter Jane udtales Jæn.

Du frygted for at Adræsen var ikke rægtig mit Postofis er Troy.

Jeg har forglæmt at sige saameget som Tak for de Portrætter Du sente mig, de var os alle saameget kjærkomne, vi vilde ikke miste dem for en stor Ting. Jeg har haft den lykke her som i det gamle Land at have alle de ... fortjennester som er at faa fat på, som Skolebestyrer, Præstens Medhjælper, Kirke Verger og deslige, sist afvigte vaar var jeg juryman og sad paa Tinget i Troy en uge men det havde jeg 2 Dol. om dagen for. Jeg er nu ikke andet en Præstens Medhjælper da min alder fritager mig for det medste af saadant. –

Til slutning maa jeg bede Dig hilse enhver af Famelie og bekjente som ønsker at høre nog ifra mig og ver du med Famelie saa meget hilset ifra Deres altid Hengivne forhen

O. Enge (sign.)

Translation, letter no. 4

Dear Nels,

I am sending you enclosed 7 portraits, mine was taken last summer, and the resemblance is fairly good. My wife's portrait was taken 2 years before her death, and is reproduced after a book (?), and resembles her well in her healthy days. Terje's, Nels' and Gusta's portraits are also well taken. Then come Maren Johane²² with her husband and the whole crowd of children in 2 portraits. Her husband's name is Charles Stewart Hardy. You will find the names on the back of the portraits, and the children have numbers over their heads, starting at the eldest down to the youngest, 7 in all. The numbers correspond with the names on the back. – the name of the eldest, Jane, is pronounced "Jæn".

You were worried that the address was not correct. My post office is Troy.

I had forgotten to say thank you for the portraits you sent me, they were us all dear, we would not lose them for anything in the world. I have been fortunate, here as well as in the old

²² His daughter (1831-1902).

country, to be entrusted with all the ... services that are possible, like schoolmaster, the minister's assistant, church warden, and so on, last spring I was member of the jury in the court in Troy for one week, and I was paid 1 dollar a day. At present, I only serve as the minister's assistant, because my age excuses me from most such things. –

At last I must ask you to give my regards to all the family and acquaintances who wish to hear something from me, and please accept my best wishes to you and your family from your always devoted

O. Enge (signed)

Letter no. 5

From: Osul Nelson Enge

To: Nils Pedersen Igland (his nephew)

Place/ date: East Norway in Kansas, October 4, 1871

Kjære Brodersøn N. Igland og andre Slægt og venner der over i Norge som dette maate komme i hende.

Jeg først vil Takke for den venlige modtagelse og meget Godgjørenhed jeg nød hvor jeg færdes ved mit behagelige Besøg der over i mit gamle Fedreland, jeg hjentagende siger Eder saa mange Tak for Eders Kjerligheds bevisning i en hver henseende jeg nød der, over alt.

Jeg kand ogsaa fortæle Eder at jeg med andre Norske af mit følge kom lykkelig og vel over her til mit Hjem den 14de September, dog Ræisen var længere en paa min overræise, medste aarsagen herfor var at vi havde modvind over Atlanterhavet nædsten hele Tiden, og et jevdøgn ræt en Storm. Vi fant i hjemmet og i nabolaget alle Friske og i velbefindende, de var længere fremme med arbeidet end sædvanlig paa denne aarstid, saa der var næsten ingenting at bestille for de nykomne for det første, men nu er alle i æmplø, Ole og Matias hos os, Osul Guttormsen hos Johanes H. Stensvand, Aanon Kylland hos Løvaaserne, og Gerul Jømlø hos Hans Nelson Aase min Datters mand.

Her havde været en meget varm Sommer og noget Tørt dog Afgrøden var meget god i almindelighet, Bygget var ikke godt da her kom et slags Kryb kaldes chensbø, som

fordervede det en hel deel, men Veden, Havren og Mais Kornet var over maade godt og giver mer en almindeligt Udbøtte. Her er ualmindelig varmt paa denne Aarstid da varmen gaar op til 25° Reamur i skøggen og 90° Farenhit, jeg kan ei mindes saa varmt denne Aarstid tilforn her er ogsaa tørt at Veden som er saet for et par uger siden og senere kan ikke komme op førend her kommer Regn, her har ei Regnet siden vi kom hjem og lidet en lang tid tilforn. De er nu i færd med at Terske her, Terje Tersker i dag, Matias, Ole og Gjerul er med, som de har i forskellige Dage her i nabolaget, de synes at klare det noksaa godt, dog det er meget slemst siden det har været saa længe Tørt, saa det Støver saa forskrækkelig at de seer ud som Kulsviere naar de staar til Moltids.

Vores Preste Bolig i Norway er ferdig og han Presten Brun med Famelie er fløttet i det og finder sig velfornøyet der. Abram Bennett som handler der har ogsaa Bygget et nyt Huus der, til at Bo i, og er strax færdig til at fløtte i det med Famelien, Hand Bennett driver ei en saa liden Handel der hand har i flere uger sent af 7 Relrod Kar las²³ om ugen af Kornvare (et Karlas er 10 Ton eller 20.000 lb) handler der foruden, med Tre materialer for Huuse-bygning og selger en heldel til de mange nye Huuse her Bugges, Hand har ogsaa en liden Krambod Handel som Kafe, Soker, Tobak og adskelige andre smaa vare som Farmerne trenger til Huusholdningen, saa dere kan see at vor lille Norway er i opkomst. Jeg vil sige noget om Svinene som de sagde jeg bragte til Grimstad, jeg throer de er her endnu, da jeg kom hjem havde de sat op 90 for at fetne for Slagter og Nels paastaar at der er minds 50 igjen udenfor.

For øvrig er vi alle Friske og ved meget godt befindende, som og alle her i Nabolaget saa vidt mig bekjent. Og ver nu hermed saa meget Hilset og Takket for Deres godheds og

Kjerlighedsbevisning som jeg erholt af Eder alle, jeg vil ogsaa ønske at dette maa træffe Eder i sundhed og vel befindende det ønskes og siges af Deres forbundne

Osul Nelson

Translation, letter no. 5

Dear nephew N. Igland and other relatives and friends over in Norway whom this may reach. First I want to express thanks for the friendly reception and all the consideration I enjoyed wherever I went during my pleasant visit over in my old fatherland, I repeatedly express my

²³ Railroad car loads.

thanks to you for the steadfast love I was met with in every respect, everywhere. I can also inform you that I in the company of other Norwegians returned happily and soundly to my home on September 14, though the journey lasted longer than on the crossing, we were 27 days on the way from Christiansand to my home, in stead of 21 days going to Norway, the main reason was that we had headwind over the Atlantic ocean nearly all the time, and a full day of storm. We found that everybody at home and in the neighbourhood was healthy and well, they had come further with their chores than is usual at this season, so there was hardly anything to do for the newcomers at first, but now all are employed. Ole and Matias²⁴ are with us, Osul Gutormsen with Johanes H. Stensvand, Aanon Kylland with the Løvaasen family, and Gerul Jømle with Hans Nelson, my daughter Aase's husband. It has been a very hot summer and very dry, but the crops are good in general. The barley was not good, as it was affected by some creeps, called "chensbug", which damaged a good deal, but the wheat, the oats, and the corn thrive extremely well, and give more than usual yield.

Here is exceptionally hot at this season, the heat reaches 25° Reamur in the shade and 90° Fahrenheit. I cannot remember such a hot season earlier. It is also so dry that the wheat which was sown a couple of weeks ago and later cannot sprout before there is rain. It has not rained since we came home, and very little a long time before that. They have now started threshing, Terje is doing it to day, Matias, Ole, and Gjerul are with him, since they have different days in the neighbourhood. They seem to be doing well, though it is very hard because it has been so dry so long. There is dust everywhere, so they look like coalburners when they come in for their meals.

Our minister's house in Norway²⁵ is finished, and the minister Brun with family have moved in, and are well pleased with it. Abram Bennett who has his trade there, has also built a new house to live in, and is soon ready to move in with his family. Bennett also runs a small business where he for several weeks has sent off 7 railroad car loads a week with corn (a car load is 10 tons or 20,000 pounds). In addition he trades in wooden materials for housebuilding, and sells a good deal to the many houses under construction. He has also a little general store where he sells coffee, sugar, tobacco, and many small items which the farmers need for their household, so you see that our little Norway is in progress. I want to say something about the pigs they said I brought to Grimstad, I think they are still here, when

²⁴ His son-in-law and his grandson.

²⁵ East Norway, Wolf River Township.

I came home they had collected 90 to fatten up for slaughter, and Nils claims there are at least 50 left on the outside.

Otherwise we are all healthy and in good spirits, as is everybody in the neighbourhood, as far as I know. With this I greet you and thank you for your goodness and the expression of love which I received from you all, my wish is that this may reach you in health and well-being,
your devoted

Osul Nelson

Letter no. 6

From: Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven (b. 1794, d. 1884)

To: Johannes Nielsen (his brother) (a copy of this letter may also have been sent to his son-in-law, Ole M. Dannevig)

Place/ date: Buchanan County in Missouri, July 18, 1848

At du er afventet på efterretning fra os lader sig tænke. Det første vi kom her havde vi intet at skrive om, uden at vi var kommet så langt, og når vi havde købt land og begyndt at etabelere os var det tidsnok at skrive, eller kunde have noget at skrive om, nu har vi rigtignok posen fuld og jeg tror ikke den bliver tømt denne gang.

Vi synes at haver biet for længe, men sygdom haver hindret mig og skjønt jeg imellem haver været bra, haver jeg dog altid følt noget hodepine især når jeg skulde skrive, nu er jeg bedre og håber den skulde være over.

Først i august blev jeg forkjølet og lå syg i 6 dager, 14 dager derefter fik jeg koldfeberen som kommer af og til. Jørgen haver også havt feberen men han er forlængst god igjen. De øvrige af vor famelie haver været friske med undtagelse af Aaselle Elise der blev syg på reisen eller i Vestindien.

Efter at have opholdt os 2 ½ måned i New Orleans pakkede vi ind den 1ste april med de fleste af vort selskab for med stimbåd at reise til Missouri, og efter at have tilbagelagt 1900 mile ankom vi den 14 f.m. til St. Joseph i Missouri den fire år gamle by ved Mississippi²⁶ floden der

²⁶ Must be the Missouri River.

fra floden aftage sig meget godt du, den ligger på 40 grader nordlig bredde, og længer gikk stimbåden ikke på den tid, og længer havde vi heller ikke lyst til at reise, især da der gaves ikke anledning til by ved floden nærmere end 150 mile.

Vi stod nu på bredden af det forgjættede land og som vi skulde nu have nået vort mål; men på en stor strækning var en mængde der vilde sælge deres klæmmeretter²⁷ troode da vi det var best at bese os omkring byen før vi foretok os en kostbar og møisommelig ræise. En del av de første klæmmerne havde været fattige folk, der ikke havde formået at dyrke landet; men solgt deres ræt til spekulanter der haver kjøpt for at sælge igjen, hær er derfor en mængde land tilkjøps. Det med at høitliggende og et fint land da en kjænder frisk luft stryge altid over de høie prærier overflod nesten alt her(?). Jordbunden er overmåde frugtbar og frembringer en rig overflod nesten alt hva man byder den uden at gjødsle.

Vi var nu overmåde glade at vi var kommet så godt og vel frem, og at et frugtbart og smilende land tilbød sig os. De fameliene som var med os kjøpte straks land 6 a 7 mile fra byen med huser og noget dyrket; men jeg blev ikke så hastig ferdig. Vel stod jeg adskillige ganger i akord men det blev ikke noget af, da der var så meget at vælge imellem måtte jeg have beset det alt for at kunne vælge det bedste, og skjønt jordbunnen var overmåde frugtbar, er det dog stor forskjel på at et stykke land kan være bedre end et andet, og jeg vilde gjerne kjøbe et med huse ... godt kjøb som mulig og så godt land som mulig. Jo længer jeg gikk jo verre blev det, jeg var tillige forsiktig og bange for at kjøbe et sted som vi ikke skulde like, så jeg blev gående 2 ½ måneder før jeg kjøpte en gårdsexjon 3 ½ mile fra byen foruden hus og dyrking og gav for klæmmerætten 120 dollar. Jeg kjøpte nu et ferdig hus bestående af stue og kammers der dog ikke var andet end timre for 30 d og havde tiloven en mil at flytte det, og det kostede lit over 100 d ferdig. Siden haver vi fået et bryggerhus til så vi haver hjelpelig huser. Jeg kjøpte så et spand hæster og vogn for 120 d. 7 kjør for 62 d. 2 par oxer for 70 d. 35 små og store svin for 36 d. 4 dusin høns og 2 kalkuner for 5 d. For overparten til en vogn eller til de hjul jeg havde med fra Norge 26 d. For en ... 12 d. Og for en plaug at brække prærie med 14 d. Og i vår havde jeg kjøpt 2 par oxer til for 78 d. Jeg haver også kjøpt noget verktoij og redskaber til som jeg ikke kan mindes hvormeget det beløber sig til, men det er ikke så ubetydelig.

²⁷ Right of claim.

1 kvart land der ligger på siden af den jeg har haes da kjøpt men ikke dyrket, den erholt jeg for regjæringspris $\frac{1}{4}$ gav jeg 25 d. for klæmmerætten og to parter gav jeg 500 d. for klæmmerætten. Der var dog et hus og noget dyrket. Det er i alt 800 ækkers²⁸ land bestående af prærie og skogland og af beste jordbund og i en strækning. De jeg havde kjøpt kunde vi endnu have dypløiet en del land til korn og vede; men da jeg havde ingen reaps til indhegning kunde det intet nytte, og havde desuden nok at bestille med at få husene ferdige og indrattet til vinteren. Vi høster en del præriehøi og kjøpte 24 ækkers korn for 75 d. til at føde kreatur og svin med af hvilke vi havde en del til overs; vi måtte naturligvis hente på ageren.

Da både jeg og Jørgen haver været syge have vi måtte holde leiefolk; men vi haver dog fået splittet 7 til 8000 reabs i vinter hvormed vi haver indhegnet 75 ækkers til korn, nogle poteter, lit havre og hampager. Vi haver fået brækket 10 til, ræsten må vi spare til neste år. Veden såes i august og høstes ... og korn i mai. Korn der er moden i september høstes ofte ikke før over jul, og de kan gjerne stå hele vinteren da de er forsynet med en hams som uveir ikke kan trænge igjennem. Formedels arbeid med indhegningen kommer vi ikke til at pløye førend i mai, og vi bruger 5 a 6 par oxer for plojen der skjærer og vælger fårer på 18-20 tommers bredde, og vi oplægger 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ækker om dagen, sommetider må vi søge efter dyrene $\frac{1}{2}$ dag og mer så det bliver ikke altid så meget. Vi håber at afle til høsten nok til eget bruk; men vil få lidet at sælge, da vede og hamp er de artikler som giver penger hvoraf vi haver intet i år. Svinene de haver formeret sig til noget over 100 stykker kan vi vækselge en del af, men de flæste er for unge til at slagtes i år.

Vel koster ikke denne kvart mig mer end halften af hva der forlanges for en med hus og jord meget dyrket, men jeg forliser et års afling derved, det er godt land der beløber sig til ca 800 dollar så jeg haver ikke tjent så meget; men jeg haver fået det mere smagfuldt, og vi haver en deilig udsigt over landet, og vi kan se langt ind i Indianernes land eller prærie med enkelte trægrupper der nesten fortøner sig som skibe på det vilde hav. Da vi haver bygget høit og desårsag haver meget langt til vand haver vi gravet en brønd ved huset, og måtte 54 fod dypt før vi fik tilstrekkelig vand. Vi haver endnu at grave også en kjælder; og om en kan række det bygget os et skjul til melkekjør og kalver om vinteren.

²⁸ Acres.

Ved novembers begyndelse begynder også kulden og alt græs dør og ved nogle dagers tørveir er det modtagelig for ilden, og præriebrandene begynder. Kreatur og svin må nu fores og i uveir og kulde fryser kreaturet betydelig, bliver magre og holder nesten op at melke. De som haver greskar meloner udber (?) at fore med tillige med korn holder dyrene i stand og lide ikke så meget, men når våren og sommeren begynder bliver de ligeså hastig fede igjen, og giver tillige overflødighed af melk. Enkelte dage om vinteren er meget koldt og de nordlige vinde tillige skarpe og gjennemtrængende; men varer kun 2 a 3 dager ad gangen. Sneen var et par ganger opimod 5 tommer højde var også vekk omtrent på dagen, og vinteren er i det hele taget meget mild og behagelig her med lidet uveir. April mai og juni regner det mest, men varer kun nogle timer eller ½ dag ad gangen og er ledsaget af torden og lyner til dels meget hårdt. Sommeren er i det hele taget meget varm; men ikke varmere end at folk kan holde ud i tungt arbejde hele dagen i det mindste ... høstmånderne er her tørveir men ved den dybde jorden haver er der fuktighed nok for plantene til kulden kommer.

Dette år haver været ualmindelig tørt så at en del kilder er begyndt at udtørres. Vedehøsten har alligevel været ualmindelig god, og veden er falden 20 cent pr. busel,²⁹ og den sælges nu for 40 cent pr. busel. Flesk er også i sommer meget lavt, og haver været solgt for 2 cent pr. pund, røget i forrige år kostet det 6 cent, den almindelige pris i slagtetiden er i almindelighet 2 cent pundet og da følger hode ben og ister med. Smør gjælder om sommeren 6 og om vinteren 12 cent pundet, kyllingene 1 dollar dusinet, æpler 16 cent dusinet, kaffe og sukker 10 cent pr. pund, salt 60 cent buselen. Klædevarerne kan jeg ikke sige er dyrt på, sko 1 dollar paret og krambodene er forsynt med en mængde af alle slags varer som her er brug for.

På landet begynder en nu med traskemaskiner, maskiner til at kutte vede med hvormed 1 mand og 2 heste kutter 10 ækker om dagen, og her er maskiner til hampbryding, og jorden er læt at dyrke, aligevel er arbeidere dyre her, og en god arbeider fortjener ofte 1 dollar om dagen, månedslønnen er 10 a 12 dollar, og årslønnen 80 a 100 dollar. På stimbåden er det 25 dollar om måneden.

Af vilde frugter er stikkelsbær plommer og moreller de beste, humlen voxer vildt til en høi grad af fuldkommenhed idet den slynger sig op på toppen af kratskoven og udbreder sig så man af en rod kan plukke en mængde. Jordbunnen er overmåde frugtbar og frembringer slig

²⁹ busel = bushel = 27,22 kg ("1/4 tønne").

en overflod nesten alt hva man byder den uden at gjødsles, især er det et land for hagevexer og træfrugter. Flodene og nogle små indsjøer er rige på god fisk, men vi haver endnu ikke fået tid til at skjænke fiskeriet nogen opmærksomhed. Jørgen var med naboen en dag i vår, med en liden båd (?) der ble trækket af en mand i hver ende og uden taug, vadede omkring på 3 fods vand. Jørgen fik dog på $\frac{1}{6}$ part så meget han kunde bære. Jørgen er mer til fornøjelse end nytte. Præriehønene der er så store som en tamhøne går man sjelden på jagt efter uden at komme hjem med ca 8 stykker ad gangen.

(Here ca. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the letter is blotted out)

Frankstykker, Engelske pund og 10 gylden stykker ere bekendte og går nesten som landets mynt, 10 gyldenstykker i guld går for 4 dollar. Et pund for 4 dollar og 85 cent. 5 frank for 93 a 95 cent. Ellers kan man blive af med alslags guld og sølvmynter.

En stor del haver bedt mig om brev eller efterretning fra Amerika, men det er for vidløftig at skrive til så mange. Jeg beder dem derfor at lade dette brev gå omkring, eller rætttere udskrive en afskrift heraf, så enhver som ønsker det kan få det at vide. Mit brev er kort og sætningene ufuldstendige, men jeg henviser til Reiersens beretning der svarer meget godt til dette sted. Hils mine venner og gamle naboer at vi lever vel og er meget glade og fornøjet med vor stilling i den nye verden. Hils kaptein Pedersen der førte os over til Havre, vi er ham meget forbunden for hans venlige og omgjengelige og gode forhold på vor reis til Havre.³⁰

P. Nielsen

Translation, letter no. 6

It is quite likely that you are waiting for news from us. When we first came here, we had nothing to write about, except that we had come this far, and when we had bought land, and had started to establish ourselves, it was time to write, or could have something to write about, now, however, the bag is full and I do not think it shall be emptied this time. Seemingly, we have waited too long, but illness has prevented me, and though I have been well at times, I

³⁰ Compare *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 1* in their views of Norwegian ships and their crews.

have always had a headache, especially when I was about to write. Now I feel better and hope it must be over.

In the beginning of August I caught a cold, and lay ill for 6 days, 14 days thereafter I got the cold fever which comes and goes. Jørgen has also had the fever, but he is long since well again. The other members of our family have been well, with the exception of Aaselle Elise³¹ who got ill on the journey or in the West Indies.

Having stayed for 2 ½ months in New Orleans, we packed our belongings on April 1, with most of our company to go by steamboat to Missouri, and after having covered 1,900 miles, we arrived on the 14th the following month at St. Joseph in Missouri, the four-year-old town by the Mississippi River,³² which from the river looks really nice, it is situated at 40 degrees north, and the steamboat did not go any further at that time, and we were not inclined to go any further, particularly since there is not another town on the river for 150 miles.

We now stood on the banks of the Promised Land, and should have reached our destination; but over a distance there were many people who wanted to sell their claims, and we then found it wise to look around the town before embarking on a costly and burdensome journey. Some of the first settlers had been poor people, who had not managed to cultivate the land; but had sold their rights to speculators who have bought it in order to sell, here is therefore a lot of land for sale. Most of the land is on high grounds, it is nice, and you may feel the fresh air sweep across the high prairies (?). The soil is very fertile and brings forth in profusion nearly everything you offer it without manure.

We were now exceedingly happy to have arrived successfully, and that a fertile and smiling land lay open to us, the families in our company at once bought land, 6 to 7 miles from town, with houses and some cultivated land; but I did not finish that quickly. I was on several occasions bargaining, but it did not come to anything, because there were so many properties to choose between and I felt I had to see them all to make the best choice, and though the soil is very fertile, one piece of land may be better than another, and I wanted to buy land with houses ... as good a bargain as possible, and the best land possible. The longer I waited, the worse it got, I was very careful and anxious to avoid buying a place I would not like, so it

³¹ His daughter (1826-1873).

³² Must be the Missouri River.

took me 2 ½ months before I purchased a farmsection 3 ½ miles from town, with a house and cultivated land, and paid 120 dollars for the claim. I now bought a house which was completed, consisting of a living room and a lean-to, but which was little else than timber worth 30 dollars, and had in addition to move it one mile, and it cost me a little more than 100 dollars completed. Since then we have added a wash-house, so we have enough houses. I then bought a team of horses and a wagon at 120 dollars. 7 cows at 62 dollars. 2 span of oxen at 70 dollars. 35 small and large pigs at 36 dollars. 4 dozen hens and 2 turkeys at 5 dollars. For a wagon-box for the wheels I had brought from Norway, 26 dollars. For a ... 12 dollars, and for a plough to break the prairie with, 14 dollars. Last spring I had bought 2 more teams of oxen at 78 dollars. I have also bought some tools and implements, I do not remember the price, but it was not insignificant.

One quarter land alongside with mine I also bought, but I have not cultivated it. For the claim I paid 25 dollars for ¼, which is government price, and for the claim of two parts I paid 500 dollars. There was though one house and some cultivated land. There is, in all, 800 acres consisting of prairie and woodlands, the best soil, and in one stretch. Those I had bought we might have ploughed deep for corn and wheat, but as I had no posts (?) for the fencing, it was no use, and in addition we were busy getting the houses ready and complete for the winter. We harvested some prairie hay and bought 24 acres of corn at 75 dollars, to feed the cattle and the pigs, of which we have some leftovers; of course we had to collect it in the field.

Since both I and Jørgen³³ have been ill, we had to hire help; but we have managed to split 7 to 8,000 rails this winter, and have fenced in 75 acres for corn, some potatoes, a little oats and hemp. We have now ploughed another 10, the rest we must save for next year. The wheat is sown in August and reaped ... and the corn in May. The corn which is ripe in September is often not reaped before after Christmas, and may be left the whole winter, as it is fitted with a husk which bad weather cannot penetrate. Because of the work with the fence, we are not going to plough before May, and we use 5 to 6 pairs of oxen before the plough, which cuts and turns over (?) furrows 18-20 inches wide, and we do 1 ½ to 2 acres a day, sometimes we must search for the animals for ½ day, so it does not always add to much. We hope to harvest enough in the fall for our own use; but shall have little to sell, as wheat and hemp are the products which give money, but of which we have nothing this year. The pigs have

³³ His son (1830-1893).

reproduced to more than 100, we can sell some, but most of them are too young for slaughter this year.

In fact this quarter does not cost me more than half of what is asked for with a house and cultivated land, but I lose one year's harvest, it is a good piece of land which amounts to 800 dollars, so I have not earned much; but I have made it more tasteful, and we have a lovely view over the countryside, and we can see as far as into Indian territory or prairie with some copses which almost look like ships on the wild ocean. Because we have built on high grounds, and therefore have a long way to water, we have dug a well by the house, and had to go as deep as 54 feet before we got sufficient water. It remains to dig a cellar; and if there is time, build a shed for milk cows and calves for the winter.

At the beginning of November the cold comes and all the grass dies, and after some days with dry weather, it is susceptible for fire, and the prairie fires begin. The cattle and the pigs must now be fed, and in bad weather and cold the cattle freeze a lot, become thin and almost stop giving milk. Those who have pumpkins, melons, wild berries (?) to feed with in addition to corn, keep the animals going and they do not suffer that much, but when spring and summer come, they get as quickly fat again, and even give an abundance of milk. Some days in winter are very cold, and the north winds are also sharp and piercing; but they only last 2 to 3 days at a time. A couple of times the snow was nearly 5 inches deep, but it disappeared in one day, and the winter is on the whole very mild and pleasant with few storms. It rains most in April, May, and June, but it only lasts for some few hours or a half day at a time, and is accompanied by heavy thunder and lightening. In general, the summer is very hot; but not as hot as to make it impossible for people to carry on with heavy work the whole day, at least ... the fall months are dry, but the soil is so deep that there is humidity enough for the plants until the frost comes.

This year has been exceptionally dry, so that some springs are beginning to dry out. The wheat harvest has all the samme been very good, and the price of wheat has fallen 20 cents a bushel, and is now sold at 40 cents a bushel. The price of pork is also very low this summer, and has been sold at 2 cents a pound, bacon cost last year 6 cents, the usual price at butchering time is 2 cents a pound and in that case head, legs, and leaf fat are included. In the summer butter goes at 6, and in the winter 12 cents a pound, chickens at 1 dollar a dozen, apples at 16 cents a dozen, coffee and sugar at 10 cents a pound, salt at 60 cents a bushel. I cannot say that

clothes are expensive, shoes at 1 dollar a pair, and the stores are supplied with lots of different goods, useful here.

In the countryside one has started using threshing machines, machines for reaping the wheat, thereby enabling 1 man and 2 horses to harvest 10 acres a day, and here are machines to cut the hemp, and the soil is easy to cultivate, and yet workers are high-priced, and a good worker often deserves 1 dollar a day, the monthly wages are 10 to 12 dollars, and a year's pay 80 to 100 dollars. On the steamboat it is 25 dollars a month.

The best wild fruits are gooseberries, plums, and cherries, the hop grows wild to such perfection, winding its way to the top of the thicket, and spreading so that one may pluck a lot from one single root. The soil is very fertile, and brings forth an abundance of everything one offers it without manure, in particular this is land suited for garden crops and fruit trees. The rivers and some minor lakes are rich in good fish, but we have so far had little time for fishing. Jørgen joined the neighbour one day this spring, with a small boat (?) which was drawn by one man at each end and without ropes, wading at about 3 feet, Jørgen got with his 1/6th share as much as he could carry. Jørgen is more fun than useful. The prairie chickens are as big as farm chickens, and one seldom goes hunting without coming home with about 8 of them at a time.

(Here ca. ¼ of the letter is blotted out)

(In the papers and notes left by Nora C. Nelson in St. Joseph, MO, I had the good fortune to find a translation for the rough draft of this same letter. The letter sent to Norway, and this draft are in the main the same, but the draft contains six paragraphs not found in the letter. The translation is probably by Frank G. Nelson/ Nora C. Nelson. The translation is printed here by courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO. It is possible that a copy of this letter was sent to his son-in-law, O.M. Dannevig.

The six paragraphs are inserted and marked with an *.)

*Wild ducks and geese are common, and good eating. There are also wild bees here, and a number of people now have a good many tame ones; honey costs five cents a pound. Of predatory animals the prairie wolf does particular damage; it destroys the little pigs, lambs,

chickens, and geese. There is also a little animal here, the name of which I have forgotten, which is a little bigger than a cat; it destroys the chickens. There are also hawks here.

*I cannot say that there are many snakes here, and since the soil is good everywhere it is seldom that one comes across them. Still, we have found and killed ten rattle-snakes during our fencing and plowing; although they were six or eight years old, they were not very large. When you get too near to them, they begin to shake their rattles, and you tell their age by their rattles. There are also some prairie-snakes, which are not regarded as poisonous; we have plowed up some of them.

Francs, English pounds and 10 gilder coins are accepted and used almost like the local currency, 10 gilder coins in gold are valued at 4 dollars. One pound at 4 dollars and 85 cents. 5 francs at 93 to 95 cents. Otherwise, one may use all kinds of gold and silver coins.

*I have seen in several letters written home from America that the writers will neither recommend nor discourage migration to America; this comes from their unwillingness to have anyone blame them if anyone is not satisfied. And how shall anyone be satisfied in America, when he wants at once to be mighty and wealthy, to live well, work little, and earn much? If a man falls sick, you would have been well if you had stayed home. For however good things in reality are here, a man still has to go through a purgatory before he can improve his lot, since one is unfamiliar with conditions and the method of work, he does not understand the language, and he occasionally falls ill. One has an especially hard time when he takes new land, building and cultivating and making himself fairly comfortable, - and a man can meet misfortune and trouble in America just as well as in other places. But I have not heard that any of the Norwegians who were in our party have been dissatisfied, but rather very glad that they have such good prospects for the future. And the first difficulties are as good as finished.

Many have asked me for letters or information from America, but it is too long-winded to write to that many people. I therefore ask you to let this letter circulate, or more correctly, make a copy, so that anybody may read it.³⁴ My letter is short, and the sentences incomplete,

³⁴ Letters from the pioneers fall within the frames of a genuine literary genre. They are not really personal letters in a modern sense of the word, but rather elements in a wider story: emigration recorded by the emigrants themselves. The purpose is in most cases clear, to pass on information about the new land and the prospects of a better life to be found there. The pioneers wanted more people to follow in their footsteps. The letters are seldom directed to individuals, but rather to groups of people. The stories were often read aloud, or passed on as copies

but I refer you to Reiersen's report, which describes this place very well. Give my regards to my friends and old neighbours, tell them we live well, and are very happy and pleased with our life in the new world.

*Now if you want to follow us, then I'll have land ready for you, and if I know well enough ahead of time, I hope to get a house built and some land broken so you can have something to start with. I suppose you cannot be ready before spring or summer. If you want to come, and there are others who want to come, I can for good reasons recommend this country. There is still enough land here at reasonable prices.

* Everyone here dresses like a gentleman, and one sees no difference between a farmer and a government official; they are all equal here, and a plain man's son is just as likely to be an official as the president's, if he has a clear head and by his virtues and learning makes himself deserving of the position. Class and birth do not count here.

* In New Orleans, which I have written about, I built a gig and a skiff on a flatboat and sold them for \$ 150. I had to sell the flatboat for more than it cost me, but I used it as a house and took the material from it – since it was built of oak – so I did not lose so much. Niels worked at the shipyard and on the docks for a dollar and a half a day and earned \$ 50 there. When we did not have work he was with me on the flatboat, so expenses were not so great in New Orleans. It is the best place I can imagine for a boat-builder.

Give my regards to captain Pedersen who brought us to le Havre, we are very thankful for his friendly and sociable ways, and the good conditions on our passage to le Havre.

P. Nielsen

to new hands. The authors wanted to be guides and advisors. Their letters were to be trusted; who wanted to be held responsible for lies at a return to the native country, or at the arrival of new immigrants? On such a background, many of the early letters seem to be rather impersonal, with little show of feelings. They often presuppose knowledge of similar letters, and may make use of set phrases and clichés. They are part of a tradition, and therefore a simple "etc." may in many cases be meaningful.

Letter no. 7**From: Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven****To: Johannes Nielsen****Place/ date: St. Joseph, Buchanan County in Missouri, May 14, 1857**

Kjære broder J. Nielsen

For omtrent 5 år siden modtog jeg et brev fra dig dateret 7 mai 1852, hvoraf jeg ser at dere lever vel den tid. Jeg haver altid tænget at skrive dig til, men jeg haver altid bleven afbrudt. Jeg må nu tage det på tværi (?), og skjønt tiden er gleden så langt, at jeg antager at du vænter ikke længer på brev fra mig, er det dog for meget at dere aldrig skulde høre noget fra mig, skjønt jeg nesten er afvendt med at skrive, og har kundet lidet før, dette gjør en modbydelig for at skrive, så meget mer som et brev fra Amerika ikke burde være intetsigende, og flere gjenstande som jeg tænkte at skrive om udfordrer en øvet pæn.

Vi lever alle væl. At Sara døde for nogle år siden antager jeg at dere haver hørt. Hun efterlod sig 3 sønner hvoraf den yngste er hos os. Olsen Dannevig bor nu på mit land og er gift med datter til Osul Løvåsen. Aaselle Elise lever vel med sin Prøyser, og er moder til 6 børn hvoraf en er død. De havde et uheld for et par måneder siden, ved at et hus brendte af for dem, som de havde opført forrige sommer krambod for at sælge proviant til dem som arbeider på jernbanen. Det var et tab for omtrent 700 dollars, som var omtrent hva de eiede.

For 4 år siden kom Niels³⁵ hjem fra Kalifornien og medbragte 2100 dollars. Dog var ikke ræiseomkostningene dertil fratrukket, som var noget over 100 dollar. Ræisen dertil er meget besværlig, og medtager fra 4 til 6 måneder. I almindelighed er det 4 mand til en vogn hvorpå de indpakker klæder og proviant for hele ræisen, og spænder 5 par oxer for, og en a to hæster må de have for at ride på. Ræisen begynder først i mai, eller når det er græs nok til kreaturene. Ræisen fortsætter for det meste hver dag, og der hviles kun om natten, da oxene græsse, og der må holdes vakt om natten at de ikke skal løbe af. Og de som viler tage en blanket³⁶ om hovedet og sove under åben himmel. Veien går op langs Plate floden, på den væstlige siden af Missouri. Det er et uoversigtelig slætteland uden treer, og med tør sandig jordbund, solsvide og støvet af den tørre vei er trykkende, og endelig taber denne ensformighed sig, ved synet af

³⁵ His son.

³⁶ Blanket = ullteppe.

fiernt fremragende gjenstande der formodentlig er bruddstøkker af de Los Andes. De have ... pyramide huser og skorstener.

Efter flere dagers ræise befinder man sig endelig ved foden af disse, ennu er landet lige slæt, og vedbliver til man befinder sig i en dahl på bjergkjæden de Los Andes. Uden at mærke at man har gået opefter have man dog sneen i bjergene på begge sider af sig i ... og skjønt der fryser is om natten i dalen er der dog gjerne ypperlig gras til kreaturene. Nu fortsættes gennem forskellige dale hvor der findes røgende kilder salivatus og søde kilder samt soda kilder. Man kommer ikke langt fra salt bak.

Endelig kommer man til en stor sandørken. Nu må der fylles vand, så meget som de kan få med sig, dog for det meste bliver det for lidet, da det kan medtage indtil 6 dage før de kommer over. Mange kreaturer og folk haver døde af tørst og hede i dette sandgov. Ræisen fortsætter nu gennem issale (?) og over bjerge hvor vognen til dels må hæises op og ned, til man endelig befinder sig i guldregionen, hvor man nu skal til at fylde sine lommer med det ædle metal, til gjængjeld for sin møisommelige ræise. De første år var det også læt for dem som var heldig at blive rig da guldsanden lå så nær jordens overflade. De var nu udvasket, og der må graves dypt nu. Jørgen der ræiste til Kalifornia 14 dager før Nils kom hjem omtrent 4 år siden haver tillige med 3 andre gravet i 5 måneder før de kom så dypt at der var guld, og der var enda ikke rigt. Vi haver nylig havet brev fra ham, han siger at han haver ikke tjent stort.

Det er ellers en del møller eller pukværk opsat som drives med damp for at knuse kvards, der er spinkelt med guld. Det er latstens årer der løbe der i løse jorden lige som de løbe i bjergene i Norge, men det er kuns rige kompanier som kan sætte sådant i værk. De fleste af disse møllene tjener uhyre. Kvartsen bliver opbrakt og knust på møllen. Det meste af det knuste bliver bortskyllet ved van, men guldet er knust og for fint til at kunne renses ganske ved van. De må nu hælde kviksølv på, der trækker guldet til sig. Det bliver da lagt i en varm ovn, og der rinder kviksølvet fra guldet og kan bruges igjen på samme måde. Vi venter meget på Jørgen men han haver ikke sagt når han kommer hjem.

Ole er reist over til Kansas med sin famelie for at udsætte sig den ... 160 æker af godt land, om han ellers kan blive i stand til at få det betalt og dyrket. Jeg haver betrukket ham med penger og der må flere til, om han skal holde du. Han haver tillagt sig hester og kreaturer, og Niels kan nu gjælppe ham med arbeide. Det er ellers hart for en fattig man at begjønnde i et nyt

land. Vi haver nylig fået spørge til ham at han lever vel. Hans datter Aasille blev for et års tid siden gift med en søn af Lars Stensvand og bor ikke langt fra os, han står sig tålig godt. Niels er nu også gået over til Kansas for at klemme og købe land. Han haver ikke ubetydelig pænge, og han tror det er best at lægge dem i land når han kunde få et for regjæringspris eller noget over.

Nels Larsen og Ole Solberg ræiste over forige år, og haver fået land tålig bekvemmelig. Osul Enge Lars Hobbesland og Astrid Lunden er nylig gået over og haver fået land, og de haver i sinde at sælge deres land her, da det ikke er godt. Land er ellers meget høit her, indtil 4 mil fra byen koster det fra 40 til 100 dollars pr. æker. Mit land, efter som de sælger nu er verdt 50 dollars pr. æker. Siden mit første indkjøb købte jeg 250 æker i Missouri Bottom af skovland, det er ikke værdt mer en 10 dollars pr. æker. Jeg haver 140 æker under plog, det er alt hva jeg haver interesse af. Det øvrige er kun at betale skat af, og min skat var disse åre omtrendt 100 dollars. Jeg haver siste året 75 æker i hamp og avled derpå omtrendt 30 ton, til et beløb af omtrendt 3000 dollars; det øvrige jeg selger er ubetydelig. Arbejdslønnen er meget høi, og ingen at få, da de fleste er gået over til Kansas for som de siger at tage land.

Jeg pleier i almindelighed at have hampnen inlevert til pløiing tid, men i år haver jeg ikke mer end halvbrækket og nu klarer vi med 3 a 4 at ... thi vinteren haver været meget kold og uver så vi haver ikke kunnet brække den halve tid.

Det er den værste vinter vi har havt, skjönt vi haver ikke havt meget sne, da uvæiret haver været regn og iis. Vi have et meget koldt forår så vel som vinter. Det er formodentlig den mengde sne i nord som gjør det så koldt. I Iowa var sneen 4 til 6 fod dyp. Ellers er vinteren her i almindelighed tørre og gode med undtagelse af noget kolde vinde imellem fra nord.

Til hamp udfordres den fineste og beste jord om den skal lønne så at den kan være indbringende og man rægner $\frac{1}{2}$ ton omtrendt $3 \frac{1}{2}$... til ækeren, i gode år. I siste år havde vi en hagelbyge der skade hampnen betydelig, og forrige år var det for tørt, og for nogle år siden havde vi for meget regn. Sist vinter er hveden frøset ud, så her på flere steder vil blive lidet af den avling.

Vi var meget heldig i at have den god plas at nedsætte os, ikke alene med hensyn til jordens frugtbarhed men også i kommeriselle henseender. Ligeledes traf vi en meget heldig thid, da

landet var så billig. De første indvandrere var for det meste fattige folk, der ikke formåede at dyrke. Disse ønskede kun at sælge når de kunde få noget for deres reat (?) og nu skulde landet betales, og de som havde kjøbt på spekulasjon vilde heller sælge end at betale regjæringen. Nogle byer var anlagt omkring i landet, men disse havde langt at hente sine varer til salg, og kunde intet kjøbe af landets produkter for transportens skyld. Således var alt dyrt som skulde kjøbes, og meget billig det som skulde sælges.

Omtrent et par år før vi kom havde der begyndt på St. Joseph ved Missouri floden og der var allerede mange huser og kramboder da vi kom, men nu var her flaut. Produktene stod lavt og handelen var liden. Dampbåder kom sjelden, og luxus kunde ikke kjøbes thi her var få som havde noget at kjøbe for. Men et års tid efter at gullet var opdaget i Kalifornia og folk reiste dertil i tusen tal, reiste en stor del herover, og kom både over land og med dampbåde hertil, for at gjøre sig i stand til ræisen. Vogner oxer proviant og klær blev for det meste kjøpt hær til ræisen, og det blev tillige godt betalt. Land og by tjente meget (Bernt skomager fik også en god begyndelse da). Dette gav St. Joseph det første fremstød. Landboerne fik mer magt og mod til at dyrke, og handelen voxte. Senere blev en jernbane anlagt herfra til Missisippifloden, der dog ikke endnu er ferdig, og flere er bevilget hertil både fra syd og nord, og der skrives meget i bladene om det fordelagtige sted St. Joseph haver. Fire a fem jernbaner kommer til at løbe hertil, tillige den ypperlig frugtbar jordbund, der gjør at flere rige flytter ind, for at kjøbe land, og nogle for at nedsætte sig i byen. Dette gjør at landet stiger så meget og vil stige mer. Handelen er allerede betydelig, og omsætningen afvigte år beløb sig til 5 millioner, og vil blive mer i år da der siges at der skal bygges tusen huser til sommeren, og Kansas tager også en betydelig del varer hær.

En mængde dampbåder haver trabelt hele sommeren med at føre til og fra byen. Da de sælger sine varer hær lige billig som i St Luis tager alle småbyene i landet indtil over 100 miles afstand sine varer hær, og man ser ofte hele selskaber af vogne ladet med kjøbmandsvarer der haver 40-80-100 mile at kjøre. Der er ikke anledning til by ved floden på 150 mile opefter, det gjør at St. Joseph får så stort område.

Vi haver hørt meget lidet fra Norge i farne tider, skjönt her haver kommet atskillige brever haver de været lide indholdsrige. Med hensyn til frugtbarhed, milde eller strenge vintre, at tiderne haver været gode den tid krigen med Russland varede antager jeg. At skibsfarten var florerende haver jeg hørt. At den nu er lige så flau antager jeg. Alle de skibe man lægger sig

til i sådanne tider vil vel næppe nu finde ampløi,³⁷ og tidene således være dårlige, da skibsfarten er det meste Norge viler på.

Tidene her haver været meget gode. Amerikanerne haver fået sine varer godt betalt, og her haver bleven udført vede og vedemel for uhyre summer, og her haver været avlet meget mer i de siste år end nogen sinde forhen. Uden at tale om de øvrige kostbare produkter der haver været udført og godt betalt. At skibsfarten haver været god antager jeg Amerikanernes hurtigsailende skibe haver vist ikke forsømt fragtfortjenesten mellem de alierte og ... skjønt de blade jeg holder ikke melde om skibsfarten på den åbne søe men så meget mer om den anden fart og handel og pollitik. Som en kuriositet var dog meldt, at nogle clipperskibe der havde landet i Frankrige og skulde til Crim med amusjon og proviant og tropper, blev medsendt dampskibe for at tage dem på slæbtaug om det blev stille, måtte tage ind på deres sæil for ikke at søile fra dampskibene. Desse clippere er bygd i senere tider og er meget hurtigsæilende, og omkring Caphorn til Fransisko skjiller det ikke mer end 14 dager enten vinden er imod eller med.

Er det ellers nogen som vil ræise til Amerika for at tjene sig penger kan de gjerne komme hid, en god hampebrøder kan tjene fra 1 til 2 dollars om dagen om vinteren. Jeg haver kjøpt 3 svarte tjenere og betalt derfor 3500 dollars, og jeg behøver 3 til for at drive vad jeg nu haver oppløiet, så længe jeg driver med så meget hamp, så du kan si at arbeidskraften er meget kostbar. Jeg ber dig hilse bekjendte og venner at vi befinder os vel i Amerika, og Jens og Ole at jeg tænker snart at skrive dem til, og vær du og Margrethe hilset på det kjærligste –

Peder Nielsen

Mine beretninger er korte og overfladiske, men de kan ikke blive stort annerledes i et brev.

Translation, letter no. 7

Dear brother J. Nielsen. About 5 years ago I received a letter from you, dated May 7, 1852, in which I see that you lived well at that time. I have always thought about writing to you, but I

³⁷ ampløi = employ(ment) = arbeid, beskjeftigelse.

have always been distracted. I must now take it seriously (?), and though time is so far gone that you do not expect any longer to have letters from me, it is still too much that you should never hear from me, though I am nearly done with writing, and have hardly liked it before, this makes it hard to write, since a letter from America should not be insignificant, and many things I would have intended to write about, require a trained pen.

We all live well. I presume you have heard that Sara died some years ago.³⁸ She left behind 3 sons, of whom the youngest one is with us. Olsen Dannevig now lives on my land, and is married to Osul Løvåsen's daughter. Aaselle Elise lives well with her Prussian, and is the mother of 6 children, of whom one is dead. They had an accident a couple of months ago, when a house which they had built last summer, burnt down, a store where they sold provisions to those who work on the railroad. It was a loss of about 700 dollars, which amounted to what they owned.

4 years ago Niels³⁹ came home from California, bringing with him 2,100 dollars. However, travel expenses of about 100 dollars were not deducted. The journey to California is very hard, it takes from 4 to 6 months. In general, there are 4 men to a wagon, on which they pack clothes and provisions for the whole journey, hitch up 5 pair of oxen, and they must have one or two horses to ride on. The journey begins at the beginning of May, or when there is enough grass for the oxen. They keep going almost every day, and they only rest at night, while the oxen are grazing, and they must keep watch at night to prevent them from running off. And those who rest put a blanket under their head and sleep under the open sky. The trail follows the Platte River, on the western side of Missouri. It is difficult to find the way over the plains which are without trees, a loose and sandy ground, the heat from the sun and the dust from the dry trail are oppressive, and at last this monotony comes to an end at the sight of the distant protruding objects which presumably are parts of Los Andes. They have the shape (?) of pyramid houses and chimneys.

After several days' journey one finds oneself at last at the foot of these, still the land is just as flat, and remains so, until one comes to a valley in the mountain range called Los Andes. Without having noticed the rise of the trail, one has snow on the mountains on both sides, and even though it freezes to ice at night in the valley, there is excellent grass for the oxen. They

³⁸ His daughter. She came over in 1850.

³⁹ His son (1828-1888).

now go on through different valleys where there are boiling springs, alkali springs, sweet water springs, and also soda springs. You do not get far without salt on your back (?).

Eventually you reach a large sand desert. Now water must be filled up, as much as it is possible to carry, though mostly it is too little, since it may take up to 6 days to get across. Many oxen and people have died of thirst and heat in this driving sand. The journey goes on through halls of ice (?) and over mountains where the wagon sometimes must be hoisted up and down, until you at last are in the gold region, where you are about to fill your pockets with the precious metal, in return for the strenuous journey. The first years it was easy for those who were lucky to get rich, as the gold sand lay close to the surface. It is now washed out, and one must dig deeper. Jørgen,⁴⁰ who left for California 14 days before Nils came home, about 4 years ago, has with 3 others dug for 5 months before they came as deep as to find gold, and there was not a lot. We recently had a letter from him, and he says he has not earned much.

There are also built some mills and crushers, powered by steam to crush quartz, which is thin in gold. The veins run in the loose ground, just as they run in the mountains in Norway, but only rich companies can put such things to work. Most of these mills make a huge profit. The quartz is taken out and crushed on the mill. Most of the crushed material is washed off with water, but the gold is crushed and too fine-grained to be cleansed by water alone. They must now pour on mercury, which attracts the gold. It is then put in a hot oven, and there the mercury separates from the gold, and can be used again in the same manner. We are waiting for Jørgen, but he has not said when he shall be home.

Ole has gone over to Kansas with his family, to settle there ... 160 acres of good land, if he otherwise could be able to get it paid and cultivated.⁴¹ I have given him money, and more is needed, if he is to manage. He has acquired horses and cattle, and Niels is now in a position to help him with work. It is hard for a poor man to start in a new country. We have recently got news that he lives well. His daughter Aasille got married to one of Lars Stensvand's sons⁴² about a year ago, and lives not far from us, he is doing fairly well. Niels has also moved into

⁴⁰ His son.

⁴¹ His brother who emigrated in 1850.

⁴² Johannes Stensvand.

Kansas to claim and buy land. He is rather well off, and he thinks it best to put the money in land, because he could have land at government price, or slightly over.

Nels Larsen and Ole Solberg went over last year, and have got satisfactory land. Osul Enge, Lars Hobbesland, and Astrid Lunden are recently gone over, and have acquired land, and they intend to sell their land here, since it is poor land. Land is very expensive here, up to 40 miles from town, it costs from 40 to 100 dollars per acre. My land, according to current prices, is worth 50 dollars per acre. Since my first purchase, I've bought 250 acres of woodland in Missouri Bottom, it is not worth more than 10 dollars per acre. I have ploughed 140 acres, that is all I have interest in. The rest only brings with it taxes, and my tax these years have been about 100 dollars. Last year I have had 75 acres of hemp, and harvested about 30 tons, at an amount of ca. 3,000 dollars; the rest that I sell is insignificant. Wages are very high, and labour is hard to find, most people have gone over to Kansas to take land, as they say.

Usually I have delivered the hemp at ploughing time, but this year I have not more than half ploughed, and now we manage with 3 to 4 to ... because the winter has been very cold with storms, so we have been unable to plough half the time.

It is the worst winter we have had, although we have not had much snow, but the bad weather has been rain and ice. We had a very cold spring, as well as winter. It is probably the heaps of snow in the north that makes it so cold. In Iowa the snow was 4 to 6 feet deep. Otherwise, the winters here are in general dry and pleasant, with the exception of some cold winds from the north.

To make a profit on hemp, the finest and best soil is needed, and one estimates $\frac{1}{2}$ ton about 3 $\frac{1}{2}$... an acre, in good years. Last year we had a shower of hail which damaged the hemp considerably, and last year it was too dry, and some years ago we had too much rain. Last winter the wheat froze, so in many places there will be little to harvest.

We were very lucky to have such a good place to settle, not only as regards the fertile soil, but also in commercial respects. We also struck a lucky time, as the land was cheap. The first immigrants were for the most part poor, who did not succeed in cultivating the land. They only wanted to sell as long as they could get something for their ... and now the land must be paid, and those who had bought on speculation would rather sell than pay the government.

Some towns were established in the districts, but had a long way to get goods for sale, and could not buy anything of the produce, because of the transport. In this way, everything that should be bought was expensive, and what was sold was very cheap.

A couple of years before we arrived, building had started in St. Joseph on the Missouri river, and there were already many houses and stores when we came, but now it is quiet. Products were low in price, and trade was bad. Steamboats seldom arrived, and luxuries could not be bought because there were few who had money to use. But about one year after gold was discovered in California, and people went there by thousands, many people travelled here, and came here both over land and by steamboat, to prepare for the journey. Wagons, oxen, provisions, and clothes were mostly bought here for the journey, and were in addition well paid. The district and the town earned a lot of money (Bent shoemaker also got a good start then).⁴³ This gave St. Joseph the first step forward. The farmpeople got more power, and the courage to cultivate, and trade grew. Later, a railroad was constructed from here to the Mississippi River, it is not yet finished, and more are funded, from the south and the north, and a lot is written in the papers about the advantageous position St. Joseph occupies. Four to five railroads are going to converge here, and also the rich and fertile soil, make more rich people move in here, to buy land, and some to settle in the town. This makes prices for land rise, and they will go on rising. Trade is already lively, and business last year was 5 million, and will be more this year, since they say that one thousand houses are going to be built this summer, and Kansas also fetches a good many products here.

A lot of steamboats have a busy time in the summer, coming and going. Because they sell their goods here just as cheap as in St. Louis, all the little towns in the region, up to 100 miles away, get their goods here, and one often sees whole companies of wagons loaded with commodities, having 40-80-100 miles to go. There are no towns for 150 miles up river, this gives St. Joseph such a big district.

We have heard very little from Norway in days past, though there have been several letters, they have been meagre in contents. I presume that with regards to fertility, mild or hard winters, times have been good during the war with Russia (?).⁴⁴ I have heard that shipping was flourishing. I presume it is now just as weak. All the ships one builds in such times, can

⁴³ Bent Hansen Molland

⁴⁴ The Crimean War

hardly be employed now, as times are bad, and shipping is what Norway mostly must rely upon.

Times have been very good here. The Americans have received good payment for their goods, and wheat and wheat flour have been exported at vast sums of money, and we have harvested a lot more these last years than ever before. Without speaking about all the other costly commodities which have been exported and well paid for. I presume that shipping has done well. The Americans' fast sailing ships have certainly not missed a freight profit between the allies and ... though the papers I receive do not report on shipping activities on the open sea, as much as about other transports and trade and politics. As a curiosity it was reported that some clippers which had landed in France, going to the Crimea with ammunition and provisions and troops, were escorted by steamships to take them on tow if there was a windstill, had to shorten their sails not to leave the steamships behind. These clippers are built lately, and are very fast, and from Cape Horn to San Francisco the difference (?) is not more than 14 days whether they have a downwind or a headwind.

If anybody would want to go to America to earn money, they may come here, a good hempbreaker can earn from 1 to 2 dollars a day in the winter. I have bought 3 black slaves, and paid 3,500 dollars for them, and I need another 3 to manage what I have ploughed, as long as I am growing hemp, so you might say that manpower is expensive. I ask you to give my regards to acquaintances and friends, we are well in America, and tell Jens and Ole that I intend to write to them, I send my warm greetings to you and Margrethe –

Peder Nielsen

My accounts are short and superficial, but it cannot be much different in a letter.

Letter no. 8

From: Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven

To: Johannes Nielsen

Place/ date: St. Joseph in Missouri, no date, but probably from the winter 1871-1872

J. Nielsen

Dit brev af 12 des haver jeg modtaget og ser deraf at dere lever vel og at du er i knibe for pænge hvilket jeg haver forestillet mig, og jeg havde for længe siden sendt di pænge hvis jeg havde havt dem, tidene er så dårlige her at jeg haver ikke ... pænge enskjønt jeg er bliven loft dem en tid efter ... de vilde betale men der er enu ikke sked. Jeg kan måske få pænge om nogle dager men jeg kan ikke lide på det, så jeg vil gå til St. Joseph i morgen og høre om jeg kan få låne nogle og håber det enu kunde komme tids nok. Jeg haver ikke været så udtømt for pænge på lang tid. I høst måtte ieg og Niels lægge ud 2000 dollar for Jens Peder og Aasille Elise, de havde kjøbt et støkke land og tiden var ude og han vilde enten have ... eller 15% udbetalt sådan ... er ... især for en lang tid, 10% er lovlig men her tages 15 og over det, kan gå an for en kort tid når folk haver sådan bestilling at der kan lånes noget. De haver kjøbt noget over 100 æker for hænved 5 år siden og gav 6000 daler for, og på kredit imot at betale i termin ... ieg og Niels haver betalt hver gang, men han haver dog betalt rænten. Den thid var thiderne gode, men thiderne slog om og de haver ikke kunnet betale afdrag.

Fredrik Vedel og M. Krestine købte 180 æker for et år siden og gav 12000 for. Han havde 7000 til at betale med og ieg og Niels lagde ud 5000. Jeg gjorde alt hva ieg kunde for at de skulde få det da det lå på siden af det M. Kristine havde fået af os. Men Vedel slog for stort og lånte en hel del pænge han satte i stand med og til redskaber og maskiner, men da thidene blev dårlige haver han intet kunne betale. Han haver dog betalt rænter på de pænge som han lånte, men ieg og Niels haver intet fået. Han vil sælge noget af landet for sine pænger. I gode tider kan hær tjenes pænge, men nu haver vi intet igjen når vi haver betalt arbejdsfolk og skattene, og alt hva vi skal købe er dobbelt så dyrt som før.

Jeg og Niels og Jørgen haver pænge ude men det er umulig at få noget ind nu. Jørgen tænker på at bygge til sommeren så han må have pænger ind. Vi er noget uheldig med vor hampavling. 1870 avling er ikke solgt endnu. Siste vår kunde vi have solgt for 100 dollars pr ton, men vi tænkte at det skulde stige når det led hen på høsten, men den faldt, og nu er hær nesten ingen afsætning. Ole Stiansen haver 18 ton og Jørgen haver 12 ton og ieg haver 6 ton. Vi vil nu sende dem til St. Luis og sælge dem for hva vi kan få.

Vi haver alle helsen i famelien og lever væl. Det er en besynderlig historie du fortæller om Osul Enge, da ikke et eneste ord af det han haver sagt er sandt, og Karen haver aldrig havt

imod at sende dere penge og mod hun flere gange have anmodet mig om at få sendt dere penge hvilket ieg have gjort havde det ikke faldt så kontrari og ieg tænkte ikke det gjaldt så fort på.

Osul var hær da han ræiste til Norge, og jeg bad ham at hilse dere og S Davidsen og mine gamle naboer i Homborgsund hvilket han ikke haver gjort, da Jørgen haver talt med ham. Jeg haver ikke seet ham siden han kom tilbage, skjønt han flere gange ræiste forbi huset, som han var skamfuld, så ieg haver intet fået at vide af ham om Norge, men de haver jo i velkomstsang og klink løftet ham så høit at han kunde se hvor høye bjerger der er i ... og så kan man vel ikke vente at han tager sig af småfolk.

(without sender's name)

Translation, letter no. 8

J. Nielsen

I have received your letter of December 12, and I understand that you live well and that you are in a tight spot for money, which I had imagined, and I would have sent you money a long time ago if I had had money, times are so hard here that I do not have ... money, though I have been promised to have some ... they would pay, but it has not happened. I may get some money in a few days, but I cannot be sure, so I shall go to St. Joseph tomorrow and see if I can borrow some, and hope it will be in time. I have not been so short of money for a long time. Last autumn I and Niels had to lay out 2,000 dollars for Jens Peder and Aasille Elise, who had bought a section of land, and time was out, and he would either have ... or 15% in payment ... is ... especially for a long period of time, 10% is legal, but here they take 15 and more, it may be acceptable for a short while if people are in such a position that they may borrow some. They have bought a little more than 100 acres about 5 years ago and paid 6,000 dollars, and on credit to be paid on installments ... I and Niels have paid every time, but he has paid the interest, though. Those were good times, but times have changed and they have been unable to pay the installments.

Fredrik Vedel and M. Kristine⁴⁵ bought 180 acres a year ago, and paid 12,000. He had himself 7,000, and I and Niels put up 5,000. I did everything I could to make them have it, as it was alongside what M. Kristine had received from us. But Vedel was too generous and borrowed at lot of money, which he used for repairworks, and tools and machines, but when times changed, he had nothing to pay with. He has paid interest, though, on the money he borrowed, but I and Niels have got nothing. He wants to sell some part of the land to have money. In good times it is possible to make money here, but now we have nothing left when we have paid our workers and the taxes, and everything we buy, is twice as costly as before.

I and Niels and Jørgen have money due, but it is impossible to get it now. Jørgen is planning to build next summer, so he must have his money. We were somewhat unlucky with our hemp harvest. The 1870 harvest is not sold yet. Last spring we might have sold at 100 dollars a ton, but we thought the prices would rise in the fall, but they fell, and now there are hardly any sales. Ole Stiansen has 18 tons, and Jørgen has 12 tons, and I have 6 tons. We now intend to send it to St. Louis, and sell it for what we may get.

All the members in the family are in good health, and live well. It is a strange story you tell about Osul Enge, not a single word of what he has said is true, and Karen and I have never been opposed to sending you money, and on the contrary she has on several occasions asked me to send you money, which I would have done, had not times been so difficult, and I thought it was not such a rush.

Osul was here when he left for Norway, and I asked him to greet you and S. Davidsen and my old neighbours in Homborsund, which he has not done, as Jørgen has spoken with him. I have not seen him since he came back, though he many times travelled past the house, as if he was shameful, so I have received no news from him about Norway, but they have in a welcome-song and toasts lifted him so high that he could see how high the mountains are in ... and then one cannot expect him to care for common people.

(without sender's name)

⁴⁵ His daughter, Maren Christine (1834-1913).

Letter no. 9

From: Anders Osulsen Anderson (b. 1823, d. 1886) (son of Osul A. Løvaasen and Maren Nilsdatter Igland Løvaasen)

To: ?

Place/ date: unknown, but probably from the period 1862 to 1864

Oversat soldatvise

Thi kommer fader Abreham sex hundre tusen fler.
 Fra Missisippis kroged strøm og van
 Nyenglands kyster vi gikk fra vort verksted og vor plove,
 Har kone og børn såre kjær!
 med bristeferdig hjerte og kuns en ville hær
 Vi ser dog ei tilbake men herud støt vi går.
 Vi kommer fader Abreham sex hundre tusen flere!

Ovenstående er et vers oversat af soldatvise sidst sommer og høst da vor præsident udkaldte 300.000 mand for at forsterke De forende Staters arme. Der var først indkaldet tre hundre tusen man, og da han så kaldte tre hundre tusen flere, så fik de det til sex. Så vidt jeg ved så er her over en million mand i De forende Staters tjeneste nu. I det strøg af landet som Reiersen kalder Missisippidalen har da De forende Stater nu en troppestyrke af trehundre og halvtredstyve tusen. Og det kan ikke findes at oprørerne har mer end et hundrede og halvtredstyve tusen på samme destrikt. De øvrige af begge parters armeer er i de østre stater. Det er sandelig en adfær af vigtighed.

Jeg vil alene hær give dig en liden skildring af hva vort kompani som jeg hører til koster De forende Stater for en måned. Kompaniet består nu af 61 mand. Vor kaptein får 60 dollars i løn om måneden tilligemed 27 dollars enten han vil have dem i proviant eller penge. Vor første leutnant får 50 dollars pr. måned tilligemed 27 dollars i proviantpenge. Vor andre leutnant får 45 dollars pr. måned tilligemed 27 dollars i proviant eller penge. Vor første sergeant får 21 dollar pr. måned og proviant, og vor andre, tredie og fjerde sergeant får 17 dollars pr. måned og proviant. Alle sergeanter og menige soldater får 3 dollars og halvtredsens tyve sent pr. måned, og hvis det ikke behøves så meget klæder så bliver det betalt til dem i penge. Nu får vi

uddelt til os proviant hver tiende dag, og da får vi for de 61 mand af kjød 732 pund eller 457 pund flæsk, 832 pund hvedemel eller brød, 7 ½ pund lys, 22 pund sæbe, 3 ¼ gallon saldt, 61 pund kaffe, 91 ½ pund sukker, mål og vekt alt Engelsk.

For 100.000 mand tager den 375 barels af flesk 125.000 pund af kjød, 37.500 pund af hvedemel 250 bushel af bønner 10.000 pund kaffe 10.000 pund risengryn, 15.000 pund sukker 1.000 galon edikke, 1.500 pund lys, 4.000 pund sæbe, og 62 bushel saldt for hver eneste dag. De rægger en mands rasjon for 30 cent pr. dag.

Det er klart at det må penges i lommen for at opholde en sådan arme. Enda har jeg set en beretning fra Nyyork at De forende Stater kan føre og opholde deres nuværende arme og forbedre sig sex hundrede millioner dollars om året foruden hva der går til at opholde ...

Al handel er åben for De forende Stater gennem Qubek og Nyyork imænds oprørerne ere indesperrede frae al handel uden fra deres egne stater som de lever i. Altså er det en klar ting at de må øde på den oprindelige kapital. De forende Staters udgifter er uhyre, men de kjelder som de har at tage dem fra ere lige så gode og udholdende.

Jeg har ikke meget af noget andet end krigerske begivenheder at skrive om. Jeg haver været i tjeneste siden den 2den okt 1861 så jeg ved kuns lidet om andet end krigerske hændelser. Vort kompani har været i Nebraska i 8 måneder. Vi kom derifra i vinter, og så kom vi væien om vores hjem hvor vi stopped en hel uge, og nu vænter jeg ikke hastig at komme hjem igjen uden at hær blir gjort en hastig ende på krigen. Dær har ikke foregået nogen væsentlige forandringer i hjemmet med undtagelse af at onkel Ole Nilsen er død, han døde sist høst, og Grete Marie, den ene af onkel Anders Holtes tvillingdøtre blev givt sist vinter, og har fået et godt hjem og en bra flink mand. To af mine brødre er også med i krigstjeneste nemmelig Nils og Peder. Nils er i det samme kompani som jeg. Peder er i det 10de regiment af Kansas frivillige tropper. Osul er hjemme han giftet sig sist høst.

(ingen signatur)

Translation, letter no. 9

(soldiers' song)⁴⁶

We are coming father Abraham,
 Six hundred thousand more.
 From Mississippi's winding stream
 And from New England's shore
 We leave our ploughs and workshops
 Our wives and children dear
 With hearts too full for utterances
 With but a silent tear
 We will not look behind us
 But steadfast as before
 We are coming father Abraham,
 Six hundred thousand more.

The above-mentioned is a verse translated from a soldiers' song from last summer and fall when our President called up 300,000 men to enforce the United States' Army. There was at first called up three hundred thousand men, and when he called up three hundred thousand more, they got six. As far as I know, there are over a million men in the United States' service now. In the part of the country which Reiersen calls the Mississippi Valley, the United States now has a force of three hundred and fifty thousand men. And it is not possible that there are as many rebels as one hundred and fifty thousand in the same district. The rest of both armies are in the eastern states. It is certainly an affair of importance.

I shall just give you a little description of what our company, which I belong to, costs the United States per month. The company now consists of 61 men. Our captain gets 60 dollars in wages per month, in addition 27 dollars whether he wants it in provisions or cash. Our first lieutenant gets 50 dollars per month, in addition 27 dollars in provisions. Our second lieutenant gets 45 dollars per month, in addition 27 dollars in provisions or cash. Our first sergeant gets 21 dollars per month, and provisions, and our second, third, and fourth sergeant get 17 dollars per month, and provisions. All sergeants and private soldiers get 3 dollars and

⁴⁶ This is the original English version, printed on the letter with a picture of advancing soldiers.

fifty cents per month, and if extra clothes are not needed, they are paid in cash. We are given provisions every tenth day, and then the 61 men get 732 pounds of meat, or 457 pounds of bacon, 832 pounds of wheat flour or bread, 7 ½ pounds of candles, 22 pounds of soap, 3 ¾ gallons of salt, 61 pounds of coffee, 91 ½ pounds of sugar, English measurements.

The requirements of 100,000 men are 375 barrels of pork, 125,000 pounds of meat, 37,500 pounds wheat flour, 250 bushels of beans, 10,000 pounds of coffee, 10,000 pounds of rice, 15,000 pounds of sugar, 1,000 gallons of vinegar, 1,500 pounds of candles, 4,000 pounds of soap, and 62 bushels of salt every single day. They reckon a man's ration to be 30 cents a day.

It is clear that you need money in your pocket to sustain such an army. But I have seen a report from New York which says that the United States is able to lead and sustain its present army, and improve the economy by six hundred million dollars every year, in addition to what is used to sustain ...

All trade is open for the United States through Quebec and New York, while the rebels are confined from all trade, except with their own states. Therefore it is clear that they must drain their original funds. The United States has enormous expenditures, but the sources available, are just as good and full.

I have not much apart from warlike events to write about. I have been in service since October 2, 1861, so I know little about other things than episodes from the war. Our company has been in Nebraska for 8 months. We came back this winter, and made our way to our home where we stopped for a whole week, and I do not expect to return home soon, unless the war comes to a quick end. There has been no significant change in our home, except that uncle Ole Nilsen is dead, he died last fall, and Grete Marie, one of Uncle Anders Holte's twin daughters was married last winter, and has got a good home and a rather clever husband. Two of my brothers are also doing war duty, namely Nils and Peder. Nils is in the same company as I. Peder is in the 10th regiment of the Kansas volunteers. Osul is home, he got married last fall.

(Without signature, but in all probability written by Anders Osulsen Anderson)

Letter no. 10**From: Anders Osulsen Anderson****To: probably Nils Pedersen Igland (his cousin)****Place/ date: Doniphan County in Kansas, December 15, 1866**

... af 2den april med indlagte fotograf modtog jeg den 19de juli 1866. Den Ærkjændlighed jeg derfor er dig skøldig må jeg herved søge at betale lit på med at sende dig disse fåe linjer.

Da jeg kom jæm med brevet tog jeg fræm fotografiet uden at lade dem vide at jeg hadde fået brev, og sagde til fader og moder at de skulde tage deres briller på og se om de kunde kjænde den mand der var på paperet. Strax havde de begge fået brillene på og moder først sagde dae nei den kjænder jeg ikke. Fader sagde det samme. Jeg spurgte så om det ikke lignet nogen af vore slægtninger. Moder sagde nei – jo men det kan ikke være, nei jeg kan ikke tro det. Fader syntes nok at han vilde kjænde trækket men han kunde ikke erindre hvem det kunde være, men da jeg sagde hvem det var blev de i høyeste grad forundrede og glade over at få høre fra dig.

Nogen tid efter var jeg i Missouri i besøg hoss morbror Anders, og havde brevet med. Jeg tog fotografiet frem og spurgte om han kjendte figuren, men efter at habe beset den meget nøie sagde at han kunde ikke vide hvem den person kunde være, og efter at ha læst brevet faldt han i dybe tanker, og efter en stund sagde at når jeg skriver til dig igjen måtte jeg få vide om du kunde danse en halling.

Men dette er nok trættende, dog det er naturlig og akurat. Men jeg vil nu ved at give dig en histori elle skildring af en del at mit tre års soldaterliv måske derved bliver mer kjedelig og trættende. Jeg var i de Forenede Nordamerikanske staters arme fra 2den okt 1861 til 2den okt 1864. Jeg blev fra først af udtagen i tjeneste som sergeant med en løn af 17 dollar pr. måned tilligemed tre dollar og halvtredstyve cent pr. måned til klæder. Klæderne forskaffedes oss af regjæringen til en vis fastsat pris nemlig for en hat en dollar og otte og seksti cent, en lue 56 cent, for en munderingskjole som altid er af fint mørkeblåt klæde syv dollars og fem og førti cent, et par beenklæder tre dollars og fem og syvtii , for en kort trøie 2 dol. og halvfjersenyve cent, en uldskjorte en dol. og sex og firti cent, for et par uldne

underbenklæder fem og halvfemsstyve cent, et par hoser toe og tredive cent for en våpenkjole ni dollar og halvtredsenstyve cent, for et par uldne tæpper som bruges til seng syv dol. og tyve cent, for et par skoer fra 1 dol 48 cent til 2 dol. og fem cent.

Dersom vi ved årets regningsopgjørelse havde fået klæder for en værdi der overskred den fastsatte sum af 3 dol. og 50 cent pr. måned så måtte vi betale det overskrid udaf vor løn, men vist vi ikke havde fået klæder til at udføle den fastsatte sum så blev det manglende beløb betalt til oss i penger tilligemed vor løn. Vor uniform eller mundering var læt og ledig så at legemets bevægelse ikke skulde hindres, og aligevæl anselig og slætt.

Ude låe vi besteandig, vi havde at slags læredstælte men de tjente ikke som hus, men som et usselt tække for skyldregn og når vi var i de egne af landet som var kold vinter såe havde vi et slags tælte af læred som var bedre og lignede småe ganske lig kullehytter i Norge. Men vi måtte dog mange ganger ligge på hård frossen jord og ofte på nesten bar iise, hvorved vores helbred led meget.

Vi havde dog altid god proviant, som forskaffedes oss av regjæringen, og var ordnede efter lovbestemmelser i vægt og mål for hver soldat til hver 5 dager følgende: Af hvedemel 6 lb 14 oz eller i stedet derfor tørt brød 3 lb 12 oz. Flæsk 3 lb 12 oz eller i stedet derfor færsk kjød 6 lb 4 oz. Bønner eller ærter 2 gallons til hvær hundrede rasoner. Kaffe i råde bønner 10 lb til hvær hundrede rasoner. Sukker 12 oz til en mand hvær fem dager. Ædikke en gallon til hvær hundre rasoner. Talglys et og et halvt pund til hvær hundrede rasoner. Sæbe 3 2/10 oz til en mand i fem dager. Salt omtrent 2 potter til hver hundrede rasoner. Jeg må hær bemerke at hva jeg kalder en rason er en dags kost til en mand og at disse merker er lb skålpund oz uncer. Når pottates blev uddelt var et pund til hver rason tre ganger om ugen.

Efter at jeg har været i tjenesten i et og et halvt år blev jeg commander-sersjant med løn av tyve dollar pr måned alt øvrig med hensyn til klæder og proviant som tilforn. Det må her bemærkes at hva jeg her har opregnet er for musketterer eller fodfolk soldater til fods med gevær. Rytteri og artilleri fik mer løn men klæder nesten det samme. Dette vil nok synes at være hærilig at være soldat men i en sådan krig som vi hat gennemgået må det være en stærk mand som kunde tjene tren (?) der uden at lide vad tab af helbred om han var lykkelig nok at slippe med hele lemmer.

Jeg for min del har lidt meget på min hælbred. Jeg ved ikke om de Norske aviser har sagt noget om hva jeg her efter vil fortælle dig næmlig at ved krigens slutning den 30te april 1865 var hær inde tilfælds på de Forenede Staters side En million femhundrede og sexten mand, som da var i tjeneste. Vi har dog til sist og med meget våben brag drukket gravøl over Slaveriet i de Forende Nordamerikanske stater, det afgik ved – i en ved lovs antagen resolusjon udgivet ved proklamasjon af de Forenede Staters decreter i Washington den 18de desember 1865.

Vi ere glade over at høre at Norge har fået en Skorpion af stabelen. Gode Nels. Jeg tør ikke spørge dig om at skrive til mig enskjønt det av alt i værden vilde være mig kjær, men når jeg skriver til dig er mine breve så ufuldkomne både i stil og interesser at jeg kan ikke gjøre fordring på nogen lyst til at læse dem. Jeg forstår at jeg er ikke fri for at blande mine udtryk med Engelsk. Iblandt de ting som vi gjerne gjeder vede fra dig er om din moder og moster og morbror Tønnesøl, Kristen Roås, D. Kylland hvorledes de har det, hvormange lever af dem o.s.v.

At Maren Ørteland eller Hover Larsons kone er død, og hendes søn Hans den eneste der var efter Nikolai er også død tænker jeg at Nils Gutormsen nok har skrevet til morbror Ørteland, vil jeg ikke skrive derom. Dersom jeg var hoss dig nu da det er juul så kunde jeg nok fortælle dig meget, og jeg er sikker på at jeg skulde mætte min videbegjærighed meget. Imidlertid må jeg nu lade være for denne gang og ønske eder al lykke både dig og dine og håber at i må have et godt jul og nytår medens jeg tegner mig

Med agtelse din hængivne Anders Osuldsen

Translation, letter no. 10

... of April 2, with enclosed photography, I received on July 19, 1866. The gratitude I owe you, I must try to repay by sending you these few lines.

When I came home with the letter, I took out the photography without letting them know that I had received a letter, and said to father and mother that they must put on their glasses, and see if they could recognize the man on the paper. Right away they had their glasses on, and mother said, no, this man I do not know. Father said the same thing. I then asked if it did not

resemble any of our relatives. Mother said no – but it cannot be, no, I cannot believe it. Father thought he might recognize the features, but he could not remember who it was, but when I said who it was, they were highly surprised and happy to hear from you.

Some time after I was in Missouri, visting Uncle Anders, and had brought the letter. I brought out the photography and asked if he recognized the figure, but after having observed it closely, he said he did not know who the person was, and after having read the letter he fell in deep thoughts, and after a while he said that when I write to you again, I must enquire if you could dance a “halling”.⁴⁷

But this must be tiresome, though natural and just. But now I want to give you a story or description of part of my three years as a soldier, which may be just as boring and tiring.⁴⁸ I was in the United States’ army from October 2, 1861 until October 2, 1864. I was from first drafted as a sergeant with a payment of 17 dollars per month, with an additional 3 dollars and 50 cents per month for clothes. The clothes are procured by the government at a certain fixed price, namely one dollar and sixtyeight cents for a hat, a cap 56 cents, an overcoat in fine darkblue cloth seven dollars and fortyfive cents, a pair of trousers three dollars and seventyfive cents, a short shirt 2 dollars and fifty cents, a wollen shirt one dollar and fortysix cents, a pair of wollen underpants fiftyfive cents, a pair of socks thirtytwo cents, a greatcoat nine dollars and fifty cents, a pair of wollen blankets used for a bed seven dollars and twenty cents, a pair of shoes from 1 dollar and 48 cents to 2 dollars and five cents.

If we at the yearly settlement had received clothes at a value of more than the fixed sum of 3 dollars and 50 cents per month, we had to pay the exceeding sum out of our wages, but if we had not received clothes to fill the fixed sum, then the rest was paid us in cash in addition to our wages. Our uniform or outfit was light and comfortable, so that our movements were not hindered, and yet presentable and smooth.

We always slept out-of-doors. We had a sort of tent made of canvas, but it did not serve as a house, but as a simple shelter for downpours, and when we were in parts of the country where the winter was cold, we had better tents of canvas which resembled little coalhuts (?) in

⁴⁷ Traditional Norwegian danse in which the male danser is expected to show his vigour and resilience.

⁴⁸ He was registered as a sergeant with the 8th Regiment Kansas Voluntary Infantry, company G.

Norway. But on several occasions we had to sleep on solid frozen ground or nearly bare ice, because of which our health suffered a lot.

However, we always had good provisions, provided by the government, and organized according to regulations of weight and measurement for every soldier every 5 days: 6 lbs 14 oz of wheat flour or 3 lbs 12 oz of dry bread. 3 lbs 12 oz of bacon or instead 6 lbs 4 oz of fresh meat. 2 gallons of beans or peas for every 100 rations. 10 lbs of raw coffee beans for every one hundred rations. 12 oz of sugar for one man every five days. One gallon of vinegar for every one hundred rations. One and a half pound of candles for every one hundred rations. $3\frac{2}{10}$ oz of soap for one man every five days. About two quarts of salt for every one hundred rations. I must here remark that what I call a ration is one day's food for one man; lb means pound, and oz means ounce. When potatoes were handed out, we got one pound for every ration three times a week.

Having been in the service for one and a half year, I became commander-sergeant, with a salary of twenty dollars a month, everything else as regards clothes and provisions as before. It must be noted that what I have listed here are for musketeers or foot-soldiers with a rifle. Cavalry and artillery got higher wages, but compensation for clothes was nearly the same. It may seem to be a glorious thing to be a soldier, but in such a war as we have been through, one must be a strong man to carry the burdens there without losing one's health, and with one's limbs intact.

For my part, my health has suffered a lot. I do not know if the Norwegian newspapers have reported what I want to say, namely that at the end of the war on April 30, 1865, an army consisting of one million five hundred and sixteen men were in service on the side of the United States. However, in the end we have drunk and held a wake, at the sound of guns, over slavery in the United North-American States, it passed away under a duly approved resolution, issued through a proclamation of the United States' decree in Washington on December 18, 1865.

We are glad to hear that Norway has launched a scorpion (?). My good Nels, I dare not ask you to write to me, though it would be dearer than anything else in the world, but when I write to you, my letters are deficient both in style and interests, and I cannot expect anybody to like to read them. I understand that I tend to mingle my expressions with English. Among the

things I would like to learn from you, is news about your mother and mother's sister, uncle Tønnesøl, Kristen Roås, D. Kylland, how they are, how many of them are alive, and so on.

I suppose Nils Gutormsen⁴⁹ has written to uncle Ørteland that Maren Ørteland, or Hover Larson's wife is dead, and her son Hans, the only one left after Nikolai,⁵⁰ is also dead, and I shall not write about that.⁵¹ If I were with you now at Christmas, I could tell you a lot, and I am sure that I would satisfy my curiosity. I must, however, stop for now, and wish you all every happiness, and hope that you must have a happy Christmas and new year, while I sign

with respect, your devoted Anders Osuldsen

Letter no. 11

From: Anders Nelson Holte (b. 1809, d. 1886)

To: Nils Pedersen Igland (his nephew)

Place/ date: St. Joseph in Missouri, February 2, 1871

Kjære brorsøn Nels P. Igland

Jeg må nu tage mig den frihed at skrive nogle ord til dig, hvilket jeg skulde ha gjort for længe siden, så meget mer som du har skrevet til mig for en længere tid siden, og deri sendte mig hilsinger fra mine gamle bekendte hvilket jeg med glæde og taknemmelighed modtog. Jeg har med deltagelse erfaret at du har været hårt jemsøkt af sorg og modgang i din famelie hvilket har været et hart stød for dig; men i dette tilfelde har vi allene tålmodig at underkaste oss Guds vilje og uransagelige råd, da hans veir er ikke altid vore, og vi må sige med Job: Herren gav Herren tog Herrens navn være lovet!

Jeg må nu gratulere dig med at du igjen er valgt til landets udkårede representant til Stortinget. Det lader rigtig nok til at det har været kamp og strid til dette valg og bøndre har da ... de ... men embedsstandens veklage for dette er nok ... da vi har hørt klagetone helt herhid. Det bedste de nu kan gjøre er at henge sin harpe op i pilekvist. Men dere har dog

⁴⁹ Emigrated 1850.

⁵⁰ Emigrated 1850.

⁵¹ Håver Stensvand, 1866. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 14.

beholdt J. Sverdrup som og godt må være. Det er godt at høre at vort gamle fædreland gjør så store fremskridt i indre forbedringer og næringsveiers udvikling. På Igland er nok foregået store forandringer og forbedringer.

Det er da en ræt frygtelig ting som foregår i Europa, da det ser du til at det ellers stolte Frankrige må bukke under for Preusen, og hva vil enden blive, måske at Bismark vil hærta Frankrige til et underbrug til Tyskland. Men hvor bliver den Europeiske ligevekt som altid har været så viktig.

Har innlagt et avklip hvor det viser folketallet ved folketellingen i 1860 og 1870 i de forenede stater.

Da vi kom hertil var St. Joseph kun en liden flekk, og nu – jeg ved ikke riktig hvormange tusen indbyggere, og en meget udbredt handel. 6 jernbaner kommer ind, strækker sig uttil andre baner som igjen krødser hele Amerika. Og dertil en livlig stimbådfart på Missouri floden hele sommeren. En jernbane blev ferdig forrige år fra St. Joseph til St. Louis som går gjennom mit land kun et lidet stykke fra mit hus. Men jeg fik god betaling for det land de borttog. Det er vel fornøyd at få jernhesten løber forbi her flere ganger om dagen. En stor bro skal lægges over Missouri floden ved St. Joseph til Kansas siden. Den broen skal være meget vedløftig, da den skal tjene både for jernbanen og folkeferdselen i almindelighed, og anslåes til at vilde koste over en million dollars.

Forrige år var vi så lykkelig at få oss en Norsk Luthersk præst. Han er barnefødt i Hardanger Norge og har studert her ved det norske universitet. Han er en meget begavet og en egte Christi tjener og prædikant, han foretar tjeneste her også har han flere steder i Kansas at besøge så han har meget travelt. Mathias T. Stensvand har været her hos mig næsten et år og vi (?) vel gode venner, måske han bliver her et år til. Han siger at han kjender dig meget godt.

Hva mig selv angår har jeg ikke noget at sige. Jeg og min kone begønder at føle alderdommens tryk, og jeg er meget plaget gjegterverk. Forrige år lot jeg bygge en ny udhusbygning som kostet mig 5-600 dollars. Prisen på land her om kring er fra 50-100 dollar pr ækers som det er lengere eller nermere byen. Mine to børn er begge gifte og begge med Amerikanere. Grette Marie har 3 børn som lever og Nels Olaus har kun 1 barn. Han har begønt med kjøbmannshandel. Alle vore slægtninger i Kansas lever alle vel så vidt jeg ved.

Jeg må nu bede dig hilse lensmand Enge så meget venskabelig fra mig. I ungdommen var vi gode kammerater. Du vil altså træffe sammen med ham i Kristiania. J. Agal (?) (Jakob Aall?) kommer nok ikke til stortinget denne gang. Skulde en anledning gives må du også hilse ham fra mig da jeg erindrer ham godt og jeg nærede store tanker om ham.

Og så vil jeg sende min bedste hilsen til ... også lensmand Cimmermand⁵² om han kan erindre Anders Holte. Vi var i den tid godt kjendte og gode venner.

Jeg har nu skrevet så meget og om meget men stilen og håndskriften er meget dårlig, men jeg må tro at det er sandt hva præsten sagde, jeg viste ham dit portræt sagde han: han er klog, så må du kunne læse og forstå hva det er for noget.

Til slutning må jeg bede dig hilse på Ørteland og Tønnesøl samt din fader og moder og dine søskende. Den ... er gift med har jeg ingen kjenskab til. Og du med dine børn være på det hjerteligste hilset fra din altid hengivne farbroder.

Venskabeligst
Anders Nelson

Min adresse er
Mr. Anders Nelson St. Joseph Missouri United States Amerika

Translation, letter no. 11

Dear nephew Nels P. Igland,

I now take the liberty to write some words to you, which I should have done a long time ago, even more so since you have written to me some time ago and therein sent me regards from old acquaintances, which I received with happiness and gratitude. I have with sympathy learnt that you have been sorely afflicted by grief and adversity in your family which has been a

⁵² Zimmermann

hard blow for you; but in such cases we must patiently submit to the will of God and his mysterious ways, as his ways are not always ours, and we must say with Job: the Lord giveth, the Lord taketh, praised be the name of the Lord.

I must now congratulate you with having been elected as the people's chosen representative to the *Storting*. There seems to have been fight and strife at this election, and the peasants ... they ... but the civil servants' complaints for this is enough ... as we have heard the wailing all the distance. They had now better hang their harp in a willow.⁵³ You have, however, kept old J. Sverdrup,⁵⁴ which is a good thing. It is good to hear that our old native country makes good progress in internal improvements and the development of industries.

At Iglund there must be considerable changes and improvements.

There are really dreadful things going on in Europe, as it seems that otherwise proud France must succumb to Prussia, and what will the end be, maybe Bismarck wants to occupy France and make it a branch of Germany. But where is then the European equilibrium, which has always been so important.

Enclosed is a newspaper clipping showing the population of the United States at the Census Returns of 1860 and 1870.

When we came here, St. Joseph was just a tiny spot, and now – I do not know exactly how many thousand people, and an extended trade. 6 railroads converge here, and connect to other lines which in their turn cross the whole of America. And in addition a lively steamboat traffic on the Missouri the whole summer. A railroad was finished last year from St. Joseph to St. Louis, going through my land only a short distance from my house. But I was well compensated for the land they took. It is a good thing to see the iron horse run past here several times a day. A large bridge is to be constructed across the Missouri at St. Joseph to the Kansas' side. The bridge is to be very complex, since it will serve both the railroad and public transport in general, and is estimated at more than one million dollars.

⁵³ A reference to the *Psalms*, 137, 1: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof."

⁵⁴ Johan Sverdrup (1816-1892), one of the chief architects behind parliamentarism in Norway. Leader of the first political party in Norway, "Venstre" (the liberals). All democratic reforms in the period 1850-1890 were in large measure a result of his work.

Last year we luckily got a Norwegian Lutheran pastor. He is born in Hardanger, Norway, and has studied here at the Norwegian University. He is very gifted, and a true Christian servant and preacher, he shall serve here, but has also several places in Kansas to visit, so he is very busy. Mathias T. Stensvand has been with me for nearly a year, and we (?) are good friends, maybe he will stay for another year. He says he knows you very well.

When it comes to myself, I have nothing to say. I and my wife are beginning to feel the burdens of old age, and my gout bothers me a lot. Last year I let build a new barn which cost me 5-600 dollars. The price of land here is from 50-100 dollars an acre, according to the distance to town. My two children are both married and both with Americans. Grete Marie has 3 children alive, and Nels Olaus has just one child. He has started a shop. All our relatives in Kansas are well, as far as I know.

I must now ask you to greet Sheriff Enge very friendly from me. In our youth we were good friends. I understand you will meet him in Kristiania. J. Aall⁵⁵ (?) is not going to the *Storting* this time. Should the occasion arise, you must also greet him from me, since I remember him well, and had high thoughts about him.

Then I want to send my regards to ... also Sheriff Zimmermann, if he remembers Anders Holte. In those days we were well acquainted and good friends.

I have now written a lot about a many things, but the style and the handwriting are very poor, but you must believe what the pastor said when I showed him your portrait: he is wise, so you must be able to read and understand what it is.

Finally, I must ask you to give my regards at Ørteland and Tønnesøl, and also to your father and mother and your brothers and sisters. The ... is married to, I have no knowledge. Be with your children heartily greeted from your always devoted uncle

Best wishes

Anders Nelson

⁵⁵ Jørgen Aall (?) (1806-94), influential civil servant and politician. Member of the *Storting* for several terms between 1842 and 1870.

My address is

Mr. Anders Nelson St. Joseph Missouri United States America

Letter no. 12

From: Anders Nelson Holte

To: Nils Pedersen Igland

Place/ date: St. Joseph in Missouri, May 28, 1877

Ærede ven!

Nils P. Igland

Indlagt sender jeg dig et portræt af min søn Nels O. Nelson og hans kone Allie i håb om det kunde interessere eder at se dem, da jeg håber at du er kommet hjem fra stortinget når dette brev kommer til sit bestemmelsessted. Hva os selv angår så lever vi vel med helsen. Vi haver haft meget regnveir i vår så årssæden er kommet sent i jorden men nu ser det bedre du så får vi trøste os med det gamle ordsprog. Bedre sent end aldrig. På grund af udsigten til den Europæiske krig er farmerproduktene steget lidt i pris, serdeles hvede og udsigterne synes at være skjønne for et godt år. Jeg kan hilse ifra min broder Osul Enge der lever alle vel. Jeg haver ingen nyheder at fortælle dig og således får jeg avbryde med en begjæring til dig om at hilse alle vore slægtninger i Norge. Vær selv med famelie hilset fra oss.

Anders Nelson

Min adresse er Anders Nelson St. Joseph P.O. Missouri Amerika

Min søns adresse er. N.O. Nelson 700 & 702 N Sekond St. Luis Missouri Amerika

Translation, letter no. 12

Dear friend,

Nils P. Igland

Enclosed I send you a portrait of my son Nels O. Nelson and his wife Allie in the hope that it might interest you to have a look at them, also in the hope that you have returned from the Storting when this letter reaches its destination. Regarding ourselves, we live well and are in good health. We have had a lot of rain this spring, so the seed has come late in the ground, but now it looks better, so we must take comfort in the old saying: better late than never. Because of the prospects of the European war, farming products have risen a little in price, in particular wheat, and the prospects seem to be bright for a good year. I send you greetings from my brother Osul Enge, in his place they are all well. I have no news to tell you, and therefore I must stop with a request that you give our regards to all our relatives in Norway. You and your family are greeted from us.

Anders Nelson

My address is Anders Nelson Saint Joseph P.O. Missouri America

My son's address is N.O. Nelson 700 & 702 N. Second St. Saint Louis Missouri America

Letter no. 13

From: Anders Nelson Holte

To: Nils Pedersen Igland

Place/ date: St. Joseph in Missouri, April 29, 1879

Kjære Nils Igland!

Det er nu bleven altfor længe siden der gik breve imellom os. Dit sidste brev fik jeg over 1 ½ år siden, men har desværre endnu ikke svart derpå. Grunden hertil er jo fornemmelig den, at jeg ikke selv kan skrive, idemindste ikke uden meget stor stor vanskelighed, og det er heller ikke så læt altid at få andre til at gjøre det for mig.

Jeg kan hilse dig fra min søn Nels Olaus som er i St. Louis, han lever godt og takker for potrættet der blev ham tilsendt. Min datter Grete, som bor i Kansas lever også godt, ligeledes mine 10 endnu levende børnebørn.

Til Berthe Tønnesøl har jeg ikke skrevet siden jeg fik potrættet. Jeg har seet at Even Ørteland har mistet sin kone, det var et tungt slag for ham. Hans slægtninge her i Amerika lever nokså

godt. Gamle Maren Løvåsen er nu vel omtrent 83 år. Hun har i vinter været noget sygelig, men er nu bedre og er så vidt mig bekendt fremdeles den der holder hus for sine sønner. Ingeborg Ørteland, Nils Thompsons (Gutormsen) enke står sig bra. Hun har jo en voksen søn som driver gården efter faderens død.

Min broder Osuld Enge står sig også godt. Han lever omtrent 25 mile (Engelske naturligvis) herfra i nærheden af en liden stasjon East Norway i Kansas. Vinteren har været usedvanlig stadig i år. Ifjor høst var det tørt og vakkert indtil omtrent midt i desember. Da fik vi sne nogle ganger indtil den lå 7 a 8 tommer dyb. Ved juletider blev det meget koldt for vor breddegrad, og efter nytår steg kulden høiere end man her kan erindre på mange år. Det varede også flere uger inden veiret blev så varmt at sneen smeltet. Vi havde altså det bedste slædeføre man kan tænke sig i over en måned, noget som i mands minde ikke skal være hændt her. Du kan tro at folk også brukte føret medens det varede. Da her i regelen er så lidet sne om vinteren, så er det yderst få som haver slæder. Gjerne går det så at folk begynder at arbeide på en slæde netop når det har begyndt at sne, men før slæden er færdig er sneen borte igjen. I vinter var det imidlertid annerledes. Der blev fabrikkert en mængde slæder af alle mulige skikkelser, næppe to lige hinanden, bare det var en indretning der kunde glide nogenlunde så var man fornøyet, og afsted bar det med liv og lyst.

Da vi endelig fik så vidt mildt vær at sneen kunde smelte, så varede det knapt en uge førend veiene var så tørre at man uden vanskelighed kunde befare dem; og siden har det været temmelig tørt, indtil vi i det siste 2 a 3 uger have fået nogenlunde tilstrekkelig regn til at fremhjælpe sæden.

Tiderne ere knappe nok i en henseende: her er nemlig ikke tykt af penge; men vi havde vist ingen grund til at klage sålænge Gud giver os i overflod både til mad drikke og klæder. Det er da svært som man nu går fremad i Norge i henseende til kommunikationsmidler, landeveier, jernbaner og dampskibe. Snart piber der vel også et dampskib på Sandvandet. Nu alle sådanne forbedringer ere vist til stor nytte for landet; men det er et spørsmål om ikke et så fattigt land som Norge burde bruge mer sparsomhed i sådanne ting. Man kan jo kjøbe guld for dyrt. I år synes nogle af de kostbare jernbaneanlæg der hjemme neppe at kunde bære sig. Her i Amerika kan man undertiden lægge jernbaner gjennom øde strekninger, og stedet vil derved blive beboet; men dette kan ikke gå an i Norge.

Vor præst N. Christensen (søn af Beruld Christensen Feskvasøen, Frolands sogn) skal nu forlade oss for at drage til et nyt kald i staten Iowa. Han har været vor præst i omtrent 3 ½ år. I hans sted har disse menigheder kaldet en af studentene i St. Luis som næste sommer blir udeksaminert her til sin præst og sjælesørger. Hær er stor mangel på præster her blant de norske og det er underlig at ikke flere vilde komme over her fra Norge for at afhjælpe lidt af denne nød.

Jeg og min kone er med det samme som før. Vore lemmer ere stive og tunge så at det falder os vanskelig at bruge dem, men Gud være lovet vi plages dog ikke af nogen videre innvortes sygdom, og vi må takke ham fordi vi er så vidt, at vi nogenlunde kan hjælpe os selv.

Hermed være du på det hjerteligste hilset fra mig og min kone

Din hengivne
Anders Nilsen Holte

Skriv snart om du på nogen måde kan. Det er så morsomt at høre fra det gamle kjendt fædreland, og fra slægt og venner.

A.N.

Translation, letter no. 13

Dear Nils Igland,

Too long a time has gone since letters passed between us. Your last letter I received more than 1 ½ year ago, but I have yet to answer it. The reason is that I cannot write myself, or at least not without great difficulty, and it is not easy always to let others do it for me.

I bring you greetings from my son Nels Olaus who is in St. Louis and lives well, and thanks you for the portrait he received. My daughter Grete, who lives well in Kansas, and so do my 10 grandchildren who are alive.

I have not written to Berthe Tønnesøl since I got the portrait. I have seen that Even Ørteland has lost his wife, it was a heavy blow to him. His relatives here in America live fairly well. Old Maren Løvåsen is now about 83 years old.⁵⁶ She was somewhat poorly last winter, but is now better, and to my knowledge, still keeps the house for her sons. Ingeborg Ørteland, Nils Thompson's (Gutormsen) widow manages well. She has a grown-up son who runs the farm after his father died.

My brother Osul Enge also lives well. He lives about 25 miles (English, of course) from here, near a little station called East Norway in Kansas. The winter has been extraordinarily stable this year. Last autumn it was dry and nice until the middle of December. Then we had some snow a few times, until it measured 7 to 8 inches. At Christmas it got very cold for our region, and after New Year's Eve it got colder than people here can remember. It lasted for several weeks, until the weather changed and the snow melted. We had the best conditions to go sleighing you can imagine for over a month, something which has not happened in living memory. Believe me, people used the snow while it lasted. Since we usually have little snow here in winter, only few people have sleighs. It often happens that people start working on a sleigh at the first snowfall, but before the sleigh is finished, the snow is gone. This winter it was different. A lot of different sleighs were made, hardly two alike, one was satisfied as long as it was a contraption which could glide, and off they went with heart and soul.

When the weather at last turned mild enough for the snow to melt, it did not last more than a week before the roads were dry enough to be driven on; since then it has been rather dry, until the last two or three weeks when we have had about sufficient rain to further the growth.

Times are difficult enough in one respect: here is not an abundance of money; but there is no reason for us to complain as long as God gives us a profusion of food, drink, and clothes. There is really progress in Norway when it comes to means of transport, roads, railroads, and steamships. Soon you will hear a steamship whistle on Sandsvandet. All such improvements are very useful for the country; but it is a question if a poor country like Norway should rather be more frugal in such matters. One may buy gold too expensively. This year some of the railroads at home are run at a loss. Here in America railroads are sometimes constructed

⁵⁶ She emigrated in 1850, and died in 1880.

through uninhabited districts, and thereby the places become inhabited, but this cannot be done in Norway.

Our minister N. Christensen (son of Beruld Christensen Feskvassøen,⁵⁷ Froland Parish), is now leaving us to go to a new call in the state of Iowa. He has been our minister for about 3 ½ years. In his place, these congregations have summoned one of the students in St. Louis, who next year will graduate to become minister and spiritual advisor here. Here is a marked shortage of ministers among the Norwegians, and it is a strange thing that not more would come from Norway to help out in this need.

I and my wife are the same as before. Our limbs are stiff and heavy, so it is difficult to make use of them, but thank God we do not suffer from any internal illness, and we must thank him that we are this well, and that we to some degree are able to help ourselves.

I and my wife hereby greet you warmly

Your devoted

Anders Nilsen Holte

Write soon if you in any way are able to do so. It is fun to hear from the old native country, and from relatives and friends.

A.N.

Letter no. 14

From: Håver Stensvand (b. 1822, d. 1901)

To: ? (his brother-in-law)

Place/ date: St. Joseph, Missouri, August 15, 1866

Af din skrivelse den 30te april har jeg gennemlæst med stor fornøjelse, hvoraf jeg ser at dere alle lever vel og haver helsen. Velagtede svigerbroder det forekommer mig som jeg havde

⁵⁷ Emigrated in 1844.

tusende ting at fortælle dig om, men det vil blive mig så vedløftig, jeg vil gjøre mit bedste. For det første haver vi alle helsen og lever vel. jeg skal fortælle dig mine omstændigheder. Visseligen blev Maren syg og var hva vi kaller hengesyg heromtrent 6 uger, dog var hun meget (?) med smærten. Hjemmerå (?) hjalp dog ikke den syge. Blodsel (?) var visseligen en ulægelig sygdom hvoraf mange dør. Jeg deler sorgen mellem mig og mine 3 piger og eder allesammen den 17de oktober 1865 glemmer jeg vist aldrig, da Maren forlod denne verden og endte sit løb i sit 48 år, på den tid Maren døde troede Hans at leve blant fremmede og sørgede såre for sin moder tilligemed de andre børn. Den 9de mai måtte han følge sin moder, visseligen haver borden været tong for mig og efterlevende. Dogtorregningen og ligkisten beløb sig til mange penger. Velklædte vare de begge to. Jeg betale for begge kister 37 dollars, og omtrent detsamme for klæderne.

Vi haver onde dager med gode, og god med onde, man får tage det som det kommer. For øvrig haver jeg ingen ting at fornøye dig med. Avlingen står meget godt, og inhøstningsveiret meget got. Jeg venter at terske ud 4 a 500 busel vede og bøg, voraf veden står i 2 dollars pr. busel. Alt vi haver at sælge er ganske god pris på, ellers kunde vi ikke leve, alt vi købe er meget dyrt. Jeg vil opregne noget (?) jeg haver, for det første 4 hester, solgt 1 og misted 1, 4 haver jeg end (?). Kræatur er jeg ikke rigeligen forsynet med. 10 koer 14 vintersvin, misted 2, 7 får ingen lam. Høns tænker jeg 20 a 30. 3 høystakker og 5 vedestaker bygstakker. 7 ækers i mais korn, 2 æker hamp og tilsamen god indbo men dårlige huser, aligevel et varmt rom, dette er en simpel forståelse.

Min eldste datter Nansy Christine holder hus for mig, og gjør det bedre en ventes kunde, og syer og vasker og bager og melker og holder alt i god stilling, hun klepper og syer til dem alle tre, og er af alder henvend 14 år. Lovise Caroline er henvend 11 år Amerika Adelene på 9de åre. Det falder ikke behagelig for mine små piger at miste sin gode moder. Det var en hel jammer at høre morgenen den 17de oktober kl 7 da Maren forlode denne verden.

Jeg haver stridet mig frem så got vi kan og være tilfreds. Når vi bliver lede af at være på denne side elven går vi til Kansas og besøger Niels og Ingeborg hvilket barnene haver stor glæde af at treffe. Niels og Ingeborg kom over til begravelsen siste høst, og i våres kom Niels også til Hanses begravelse. Begge disse ligfølger så meget talrigt ud.

Nils Larsen fra Dolholt mistede sin kone nogen uger før Maren døde og sagde i våres at det stod bedre til i hans hus nå end den tid konen levede men det vil jeg ikke tilstå for min part. Det må tillige det andet ...

Siste sommer sålgte vi flere ting va ikke nu, smør ege køllinger hvoraf ikke haver til huus behøve nu. Jeg har meget at alleting bliver ikke Værlegen for synet som i gamle dager får jeg at bestelle (?). Det var så vit gjælden var betalt da vi blev ... Jeg sendte et brev til Kittel Mætveit hvor af ingen svar haver fåt, det er ofte brevene bliver forlist. Vær så snild og hils Kittil og Torborg og Omund og Berte som Maren altider talte meget om. Osuld og Anders med famelie lever vel, tillige alle de Norske så vidt jeg kjender. Min gamle fader og moder lever enu. Fader er omtrent 84 år, og er meget rask. Moder er ikke så gammel på 16 år nær og til bage hat fra ham (?).

Jeg ved ikke at skrive om i denne tid for nyhedene er ikke i blant os som i fordom dager. En stor del Danske folk er kommen til St. Joseph i disse dager. Norske haver vi af ront omkring os på alle kanter i det ostelige, men ingen kommer her og nu venter vi nogle af dine gotter for nu er dei alle vogsne nok til at besøge os viste dei finder ingen fornøyelse kan de gå hjem igjen.

Jeg må ikke glemme at lyse efter Anders Aanensen Birkedal som er ret god bekent og sige hans sidste adresse i Kansas for det første var han dygtig usæende (?) vad han sagde stå ikke mer end til denne tid. Det vil blive mig for vidløftig at opregne alle ting men blåt de vigtigste. Han logerede hos Lars Olsen fra Skiftenes omtrent 2 a 3 måneder og til slutning løb væk med konen og alle børna og hele mandens formue, så du må frit sige at det er sandt vist Peder Håland får dette at vide bliver det en god latter.

Krigen vede dere alle no om at jeg ikke kan fortelle dig noget nyt derom. Jeg ved ikke mer at skrive om denne gang. Vist jeg lever skal jeg prøve en anden gang at gjøre det bedre. Hav mig unskyldt jeg haver nesten forglemt både stavelsen og mange bogstaver er rent gået væk.

Viste dine gotter kommer til sommeren lade mig det vide i tide at jeg kan sende dig en sæddel på Engels der kan lætsage dig in på et Svensk bording huus eller hotell i St. Joseph. Du siger mig tak for potrættene dig vælbekommen. Jeg får slutte min simple skrivelse for denne gang

med en flitig hilsen til eder alle. Det er meget lamsomt for mig nufortiden. Neste gang du skriver må du adressere brevet således: Mr Håver Håversen St. Joseph

Håver Stensvand

Tilgiv alle feiltagelser. Jeg takker dig på det venskabeligste for din tilsendte skrivelse. Vær du og dine hilset på det venskabeligste fra mig og dine efterlevende søsters børn der er flinke og anselige.

Translation, letter no. 14

I have read through your communication of April 30 with great pleasure, and I see that you all live well and are in good health. Esteemed brother-in-law, it seems that I have thousands of things to tell, but it will prove too lengthy, and I shall do my best. In the first place, we are all in good health and live well. I shall convey to you my circumstances. Certainly Maren⁵⁸ got ill, and was what we call ailing for about 6 weeks, though she was much afflicted (?) with pain. Home care (?) did not help her situation. "Blodsel" (?) was certainly an incurable illness of which many people die. I share my grief with my 3 girls and you all. I think I shall never forget the 17th of October 1865 when Maren left this world and ended her course at the age of 48. At the time Maren died, Hans thought he lived among strangers, and grieved bitterly for his mother together with the other children. On May 9 he must follow his mother, certainly the burden has been heavy for me and those left behind. The bill from the doctor and the coffin amounted to a large sum of money. They were both well-dressed. I paid 37 dollars for the two coffins and about the same sum for the clothes.

We have evil days change for good days, and good days for evil days, one must take whatever comes. Otherwise I have nothing to amuse you with. The crops seem good, and the harvest weather is very good. I expect to thresh 4 to 500 bushels of wheat and barley, of which the wheat is priced at 2 dollars per bushel. Everything we have to sell is fairly priced, otherwise we could not live, everything we buy is very expensive. I shall list some ... I have, in the first

⁵⁸ His wife (Osul Enge's daughter).

place 4 horses, sold 1 and lost 1, I have 4 left (?). I have not many cows. 10 cows, 14 winter pigs, lost 2, 7 cannot have any piglets. I think 20 to 30 hens. 3 stacks of hay and 5 stacks of wheat and barley. 7 acers of maize corn, 2 acers of hemp, and in all good household contents, but bad houses, nevertheless a warm room, this is a simple list.

My eldest daughter Nansy Christine keeps house for me, and is doing better than might be expected, sowing and washing and baking and milking and keeping everything in good order, she is cutting and sowing for the three of them, and is 14 years old. Lovise Caroline is nearly 11, Amerika Adelene is going on 9. It is not easy for my little girls to lose their good mother. A whole lament was heard in the morning on October 17 when Maren left this world.

I have fought my way as best we can and we are content. When we get tired of staying on this side of the river, we cross over to Kansas and visit Niels and Ingeborg whom the children like very much to meet. Niels and Ingeborg came over to the funeral last fall, and this spring Niels also attended Hans' funeral. Both these processions looked very well attended.

Nils Larsen from Dolholt lost his wife some weeks before Maren died, and he said this spring that things were better in his house now than when the wife lived, but I would not make such an assertion. It must also be the other ...

Last summer we sold several things we do not do now (?), butter, eggs, chicken, whereof we do not need for the household now (?). I have much of everything, and I do not get embarrassed at the sight of them like I used to in the old days, I get to ... (?). We had just about paid our debts when we were ... I sent a letter to Kittel Mætveit, but have received no reply, it happens often that letters get lost. Please give my regards to Kittil and Torborg and Omund and Berte of whom Maren always spoke a lot. Osuld and Anders with family live well, as well as all the Norwegians as far as I know. My old father and mother are still alive. Father is about 84 years old, and very well. Mother is not as old by 16 years, and back from him (?).

I do not know more to write about at this time when the news is not with us as in earlier days. A good many Danes have come to St. Joseph these days. We have Norwegians around us on all sides in an easterly direction, but nobody comes here, and now we expect calls from your

young boys, because they are by now old enough to visit us. Should they find no entertainment, they may return home.

I must not forget to inform about Anders Aanensen Birkedal who is quite well known, and say his last address in Kansas. In the first place, he was very handsome, but what he said does not last longer than today. It is too complicated for me to mention all things, but only the most important. He lodged with Lars Olsen from Skiftenes for 2 to 3 months, and in the end ran away with the wife, and all the children and the man's entire fortune. You are free to tell it is the truth. If Peder Håland gets to know this, he is in for a good laugh.

You know enough about the war, so I cannot tell you anything new. I do not have more to write about this time. If I live, I shall try to do better another time. Please excuse me for having forgotten both spelling and many letters are simply gone away.

If your boys should come in the summer, please let me know in time, so I may send you a note in English which may direct you to a Swedish boarding house or hotel in St. Joseph. You are welcome to the portraits. I must end my simple letter for this time with a warm (?) greeting to you all. Life is very slow with me these days. The next time you write, you must use the following address: Mr Håver Håversen St. Joseph.

Håver Stensvand

Please forgive all errors. I thank you in the most friendly manner for your communication. Please accept the friendliest greetings to you and your family from myself and the surviving children after your sister. They are clever and considerate.

Letter no. 15

From: Ole Nilsen Lien (b. 1797, d. 1861?)

To: ? – it is possible that this is a letter addressed to his stepson, Osul P. Grøslø (“son-in-law” is then an error)⁵⁹

Place/ date: St. Joseph, Missouri, October 2, 1858

⁵⁹ See *Index, 1850*.

Kjære svigersøn

Da der er så lang tid siden jeg eller nogen av os har hørt noget fra eder tager jeg mig herved den frihed at sende dig disse linjer som jeg håber at de må vel komme dig i hænde. Med hilsen kan jeg ikke sige at det er af det beste nu enskjønt det ser dog ud til bedring. Jeg var taget af en feber for en uges tid siden, men ved hjælp af mediciner har jeg kommet mig igjen så jeg er tålig.

Det har ellers gåt tungt med os siden vi kom her. Moder Anne døde som du har nok hørt strax efter vi kom hær nemmelig den 28de oktober 1850. Og Nils døde af skarlagensfeber den 18de juni 1857. Skarlagensfeberen som den tid graserte i sætlemntet tog også på Peder,⁶⁰ og han blev liggende til sengs en uge, men han blev atter frisk igjen indtil siste vår i mars da han blev atter tagen af en så rasende feber at ikke doktor eller medisiner kunde forhindre hans død som indtraf den 19de mars om morgenen klokken 7 og da var jeg alene med Helene og Kirsten som var igjen av os.

Jeg kunde da ikke arbeide gården men leide den ud såe at jeg skal erholde en trediedel af maisen som bliver avlet på gården, og jeg erholder 3 dollars pr ækers for hva de har såd med hamp, og så solgte jeg på augsion de løsøre som vi havde, gards og andre redskaper, og hæste og alle kreaturene, men forbeholdt mig 2 hæste og en 4 hjuls arbeidsvogn som jeg endnu har. Jeg solgte 2 hæster og 3 par kjøreoxer og nogle koer og kalver og alle gårdsredskabene for nærvæd 640 dollars, som jeg solgte på 11 måneders kredit, pengene fåes i mars 1859. Og så flyttede Helene til St. Joseph og tog tjeneste og fik ... dollars om måneden hvor hun var en temmelig lang tur, men nu har hun gået på Engelsk skole igjen. Jeg flyttet til Anders Holte og har været der siden, og ved ikke hvor længe jeg vil bli der.

Osul Enge og Lars Håbesland har flyttet til Kansas og læier ud sine gårde her, de bor nå omtrent 16 Engelske mil vest for St. Joseph hvor de har kjøpt sig land, og har fancet eller indhægnet omtrent 100 ækers som de også nesten har oppløyet. Anders Holte lever godt og har en god gård. Nils Gutormsen lever også godt, men er ikke så vel fornøyet med at leve på 40 ækers hær, han søker om at sælge sin gård hær, og vil da flytte til Kansas og kjøbe land. Hær er flere som agter at sælge hær og flytte til Kansas men som en følge af siste vinter

⁶⁰ Nils and Peder were his sons, Helene and Kirsten his daughters.

indtraf uleiligheder i alle lands pængevæsen så lider vi intet deraf hær, hær er ikke nogen mangel på penge endnu. Kapitalistene var mer bange for sig for at købe og sælge så at pengene ikke var i omløb, og som følge heraf kan man ikke sælge land til priser som er den reelle verdi endnu.

Her er ganske få Norske nu i settlementet de er mest flyttet til Kansas. Osul Løvåsens sønner taler også meget om at flytte til Kansas. Nils har været en tur i Kansas i sommer for at se efter en god plads og godt land. Han var så langt som 150 Engelske mile hvor han siger der var nok af uoptaget land som kuns ventet på at den driftige jordbruger skulde komme og tage det i brug. Anders og Gunder har 160 ækers land hver som de kjøpte for 3 år siden, men de taler også om at sælge igjen. Osul og Maren lever væl og har 80 ækers med godt land her, med en god besætning af heste og kreaturer.

For øvrig har vi hat en særdeles regnfuld sommer. Det våde væir forårsagede at havre hvedde og næsten at sige alle stråvæxter gikk ganske tabt her i år, thi hva der blev avlet var af sådan natur at den er ikke brugelig, men maisen blev god, hampen slog ikke ræt godt til for de stærke regnskyld fra våren tyngede den ud så at der vel ikke blev meget på ækeren. Det har også som en følge av den langvarige væde forårsaget en del sygdom med koldfeber biliusfeber og intermitenfeber, men det har ikke været meget dræbende. Nu i en hel måned har det været ganske tørt væir, og varmt. I july var her nesten regnbyger hver anden dag, og varmen så stærk at den ... nesten 90⁶¹ grader i skyggen, og nogle dager over dette tal.

Dette var omtrent alt som jeg kan sige denne gang. Jeg har skrevet og sendt brev for nogen tid siden, men jeg har merket at det ikke har nået dig. Jeg ønsker også så gjerne at få nogle linjer fra dig dersom det kunde ske. Du får hilse alle vore folk, de er for mange til at oprægne dem ved navn, men hils dem alle på det forbindeligste fra mig, og først og sist vær du self med famelie hilset fra din altid hengivne

Ole Nelson

⁶¹ 90° Fahrenheit = 32,2° Celsius.

P.S. Jeg vil hermed bemerke at jeg formedels sygdommens indtryk så mig ikke i stand til selv at skrive, men fik Anders Løvåsen til at skrive dette brev efter min opgave og har kuns self skrevet mit navn heri.

Ole Nelson

Min Adresse er Mr. Ole Nelson
 St. Joseph P.O.
 Buchanon County Missouri
 North America

Translation, letter no. 15

Dear son-in-law

As it is such a long time since I or any of us have heard from you, I take the liberty to send you these few lines which I hope will reach you. I greet you, but cannot say that my situation is good, although things seem to be improving. I was down with a fever about a week ago, but with the help of medicines I have recovered, so I am now fairly well.

We have had a tough time since we arrived here. Mother Anne died, as you probably have heard, shortly after we came here, namely on October 28, 1850. And Niels died from scarlet fever on June 18, 1857. The scarlet fever, which at that time ravaged the settlement, also took Peder, and he was in bed for about a week, but recovered, until last spring in March when he was attacked by such an awesome fever, and neither doctors nor medicines could prevent his death which occurred in the morning at 7 o'clock on March 19, and then I was alone with Helene and Kirsten, the three of us were left behind.

I was then unable to work on the farm, but rented it out so that I shall keep one third of the corn grown on the farm, and I keep one third per acre of what they have sown with hemp, and then I sold at an auction the personal belongings we had, farm- and other tools, and horses and all farm animals, but kept two horses and a four-wheel wagon which I still have. I sold 2 horses and 3 pairs of oxen and some cows and calves and all the farmtools for close to 640 dollars, and I sold at an 11-month credit, the money is due in March 1859. And then Helene moved to St. Joseph and took service and got ... dollars a month, and stayed there a long

while, but now she has again attended an English school. I moved to Anders Holte's place and have been there since, and I do not know for how long I shall stay there.

Osul Enge and Lars Håbesland have moved to Kansas and have rented out their farms here, they now live about 16 English miles west of St. Joseph where they have bought land, and have fenced in about 100 acres which they also nearly have ploughed. Anders Holte lives well and has a good farm. Nils Guttormsen also lives well, but is not as satisfied at living on 40 acres, he is trying to sell his farm here and move to Kansas and buy land. Here are some people who intend to sell and move to Kansas, but as a consequence of last winter, monetary problems struck all countries, but we are not affected by that, here is so far no shortage of money. The capitalists were more afraid of selling and buying, so that money was not in circulation, and as a consequence one cannot yet sell land at prices which reflect the real value.

There are relatively few Norwegians left in the settlement, they have mostly moved to Kansas. Osul Løvåsen's son also talks a lot about moving to Kansas. Nils has been on a trip to Kansas this summer, to look for a good location and good land. He came as far as 150 English miles, to where he says there was enough of free land which only waited for an active farmer to come and make use of it. Anders and Gunder⁶² have 160 acres land each which they bought 3 years ago, but they are also talking about selling again. Osul and Maren live well and have 80 acres of good land here, with a good livestock of horses and cattle.

Otherwise, we have had a very rainy summer. The wet weather caused oats, wheat, and nearly all straw plants to be lost this year, because what was grown was of such a quality that it could not be used, but the corn was good, and the hemp did not quite turn out right because of the heavy showers in the spring which thinned it out so there was not much per acre.

The continuous wet climate has also caused some illnesses with cold fever, bilious fever, and intermittent fever, but it has not been fatal. Now for a whole month it has been rather dry and hot. In July we had showers almost every second day, and the heat nearly reached 90 degrees in the shade, and on some days even more.

⁶² Osuld Andersen Løvaasen's sons; see *Index, 1846*.

This was about all I have to say for now. I wrote and sent a letter some time ago, but I have noticed that you did not receive it. I also very much want to have some lines from you if possible. Give my greetings to all our folks, they are too numerous to be mentioned by name, but give them all my profound greetings, and first and foremost, you and your family are devotedly greeted from

Ole Nelson

P.S. I want to remark that because of my illness, I was not able to write, but had Anders Løvåsen write this letter on my instructions and have only written my name thereon.

Ole Nelson

My address is Mr. Ole Nelson
 St. Joseph P.O.
 Buchanan County Missouri
 North America

Letter no. 16

From: Nels (Guttormsen) Thompson

To: Even Hansen Ørteland

Place/ date: Doniphan County, Kansas, June 16, 1862

Jeg sender brev til min broder Ole med det samme

Kjære Svigerbroder Even Hansen

For omtrænt 2 Aar tilbage afsente jeg Brev til dig her fra, men haver ikke erholdt noget svar, hvorfor jeg atter engang vil skrive, og see om ikke dette kan blive besvaret, eller om dere haver ganske forglæmt os.

Om du haver bekommet mit faarige brev da haver du erfaret at jeg solgte min Eiendom i Missouri, og købte igjen i Kansas, hvor jeg nu boer. Jeg solgt min Gaard i Missouri for 1100 Dollars, og omtrænt 200 Dollars, for Avlingen. Da kunde jeg vistnok have reist tilbage til

Norge, om jeg kunde have indseet at det kunde have været mig noget til fordeel med at reise, men da faaretrækte jeg hellere at reise til Kansas hvor jeg havde bedre udsigter, baade for mig sælv, og min Familie.

Jeg købte altsaa Land her igjen Nemlig 160 Acers for hvilket jeg betalte 1500 Dollars for dog ikke alt med det same saa jeg skylder Lidt endnu. Jeg havde Penger at betale med, men jeg antog at jeg kunde bruge Pengerne med større fordeel at Arbæide op Landet noget mere – her var blodt omtrænt 22 Acers Indhegnet og oppløiet men meget Godt Land. Siden haver jeg Indhegnet og Oppløiet omtrent det same saa jeg haver nu circa 43 ad 44 Acers Oplyrket Land som er meget mer end en Mand kan Arbeide. Det var 2 Aar den 9 Mars siden jeg Flytet fra Missouri hertil, det første Aar var Avlingen kuns maadelig men Gud være laavet jeg fik saa meget at vi kom frem med Kreaturet dog mange fik Lidet og ikke alt formedelst en Langvarig tørke om Sommeren. Der imod faarige Aar slog det godt til.

Jeg vil nævne endeel af utsæden og Avlingen jeg saaede 6 Bussel eller 1 ½ Tønne Vintervede og fik 167 Bussel eller omtrænt 42 Tønder igjen i alt med Vaarvede Rug og havre fik jeg 395 Busel eller 99 Tønder derforuden omtrænt 250 Baller 62 Tdr af Mais eller Indien Korn omtrent 45 Tdr Potatos, af Hamp havde jeg saaet imellem 6 ad 7 Acres, hvor af jeg fik 3 Ton 313 lb der foruden 6 Tdr Hampefrø der for uden en del andre Smaae sager som er for Vidtløftig at Opregne saa dere kan indsee at naar Herren Lægger sin Velsignelse til da er her et meget frugtbart land. Vintersæden er overmaade Godt ud i år ogsaa og Høstningen vil begynde om et par Ugers tid til, den andre Avling ser kuns maadelig ud endnu da det er temmelig tørt men det er tid nok endnu om Herren giver Regn, jeg vil ogsaa underrette dere om hvor meget Cræaturer vi haver nemlig 2 Hester og en Faale 2 Melkekjør haver jeg Solgt med Kalv siste Høst den ene fik jeg 27 Dollars for og den anden 16 Dollars derforuden haver vi nu 4 Melkekjør og Oxer samt Ungcræatur i alt 12 stk. af sviin haver vi 17 Stk. 1 Aar gamle Faaer er her faae af endnu endskjønt vi have begynt at avle. Jeg købte toe Faar i farige Høst for 5 Dollars hvilket var en høi Pris men da vi Klipte dem fik vi 1 Bismal 1lb Uld og i Vaares fik di 3 Lam saa jeg haaber vi skal faae Faareflok med tiden, af Fjærcreaturer haver vi ogsaa en god deel, circa 75 Høns. Jeg haver ogsaa Solgt en Faale siden jeg kom til Kansas 35 Dollars 3 m. gamel.

Hva Hampen angaar fra siste Aar da var vi uheldig jeg havde den ubrækket og kjøer den til Byen saa væl som mange af mine Naboer, men i disse tider er her Vanskelig, Varehouses eller Pakboden blev sat fyr til og alt opbrendte skaden beløb sig til 4000 Dollars men same

Kjøbmand havde det assureret for 1500 D. for det første var Hampen i Lav Priis nemlig 40 D. per Ton og saa blev den opbrænt dog Kjøbmanden siger han vil betale noget men jeg ved ikke endnu hvor meget, jeg haaber han vil gjøre os Skadesløs.

Hva Priserne angaar da er di meget Flaue for hva Bonden haver at selge saa som Vinterveede Sælges for 65 cent Vaar do 40 Rug 30 Havre 25 Potates fra 10 ad 15 cent Hampe frø 1 Dollar alt per Bussel Flæsk Røget 4 ad 5 cent Smør 8 ad 10 Kaffi 25 Sokker 12 ½ Riis 10 cent alt per lb. Vedemeel 2 ad 2 (?) D. 50 cent per 100 lb Melases eller Sirup 80 cent Brendevin 80 Edik 25 cent per Gallon eller omtrent 4 potter. Klædesvarer ere overmaade Høie Priser paa formedelst Revolutionen –

Hvad der mig selv angaar med Famelie da maa jeg underrette dere om den Sørgelige efterretning at vi haver mistet en af vaare Høistelskende Børn nemlig Hans som afgik ved Døden til et bedre Liv den 7 Mai efter en meget langvarig og Smærtetfuld Sygdom, for det første blev han Syg den 7 januari 1861 og den 9 s.m. sente jeg for Doctoren som i lengere tid kom her hver dag og hele tiden siden søgte vi Læge nemlig 3 forskellige Doctorer men ingen ting kunde Hjælpe, omtrænt Paaske 1861 brægte der et Huul i Brystet paa ham hvor fra der udflød en stor mengde Materie siden efter gik der flere Huller saa det var en tid der var 7 Stk. alt i det vinstre Bryst. Siden hen paa Sommeren blev han saa meget han kunde gaae oppe men dog meget Svag saaledes holdt det ved hele tiden til nu i Vaares ved Paaske tider, fik alle Børnene Mislingerne hvor i han blev ogsaa ligende men kun nogle faa dage da blev han Bedre og havde Ganske overstaaet same – men strax tog den Gamle Sygdom til igjen og (...) blev Ligende i 5 Dage førend han Døde. Paa sit Dødslæie var der blodt 2 Huller i Brystet men førinden han Døde kunde man føle at Pusten kom udigjennem Brystet hvor ved det strax kunde forstaaes at det var ude med forhaabning. Same Aften han Døde sagde han os same 3 Gange at han maatte døe til Natten, han tog os i Haand, og bad farvel til os alle sammen om Aftenen kl. 7 hensov han Rolig og indgik i Døden til det Bedre. Tabet er Stort at see sine Børn bortrygt i en blomstrende Alder som ham men vi bør betenke os og tage til takke med Guds tilskikkelser og han er vist Lykkelig som er henfaren i Dødens Dal der hvor der er ingen Sorg eller Klage. Vi vil altsaa slutte med den fortrøstning Herren gav Herren tog Herrens Navn være Laavet, om han Havde Levet og overstaaet Sygdommen havde han Blevet Skak i alle sine Dage da den Venstre siden Axelen og Ryg var alt blevet meget mindre –

Min Øvrige Famelie Gud være laavet lever alle væl. Vi haver 4 Børn i Live nemlig Aase født den 31 Januari 1850 Guttorm født d. 11 September og Døbt den 17 October 1852 Hans født den 7 Juni og Døbt d. 2 Sepbr 1855 han var altsaa 6 Aar og 11 maaneder den Dag han afgik ved Døden Elisebeth (...) født d. 28 December 1857 og Døbt den 15 August 1858 Adeline Marie født den 12 October 1860 Døbt den 5 April 1861.

Aase ved dere sælv var Døbt i Norge, men Guttorm blev døbt af Norsk ... da vi havde ingen Prest Hans blev døbt i St. Joseph af en Prespeterien Prest ved Navn Smeth. Barne daaber bruges af dem paa same maade som vaare Norske Lutherske Præster. Elisebeth blev døbt i Skolehuuset af en Præst ved Navn Davis. Adeline blev Døbt her i Kansas af profæssor Larsen, fra Christiansand som haver besøgt os her 3 Gange og Biskop Prous 1 Gang. Aase og Guttorm haver gaaet taalig i Skole saa Aase baade læser og skriver Norsk og Engelsk Guttorm derimod læser bare Engelsk dog vi haver ikke haft mer end 3 Maanes Skole om Aaret siden vi kom til Kansas men haaber det skal snart blive bedre.

Jeg vil ogsaa melde dig at vi haver indhegnet en Kirkegaard eller Begravelses Sted $\frac{1}{2}$ acer Stor som Profæssor Larsen haver Indviet for os Norske hvor der er allerede begravet 8 Stk. Det er et meget Vakert sted omtrent $1 \frac{1}{4}$ Norsk Miil her fra – Vi haver ogsaa faaet os en Engelsk Luthersk Præst ved Navn Erharth som seer ud til er en Meget Gudfrygtig og skikkelig Mand da vi alle Ynder og Elsker ham, vi haver haft ham for 1 Aar og skal have ham et til. For 3 Uger siden fik vi indstiftet en Menighed af os Norske vi nogle og tyve Famelier i Nærheden same Præst holder Gudstjeneste hver 4 uger Altergang 2 gange om Aaret barnedob og brude vielse naar forlanges og Kategeserer ungdommen hver Præken efter denne tid.

Hvad der angaar den Amerikanske Revolutions krig da Raser den meget Frygtelig som dere formodentlig kjender til af Aviserne nu i di siste dage haver di haft frygtelig Strid nede i Virginia uden for Sydens Hovedstad Reichmont hvor mange Tusinde ere faldne paa bægge sider men vi ved ikke endnu hvem der haver Vundet Sæier vi haaber dog at Unionen skal faae Magten, saa godt som at sige ere alle di Norske for Unionen her i Kansas med undtagelse ganske faae. Her er Mange Norske ude som Soldater hvor i blant 3 af Osul Løvaasens Sønner nemlig Anders, Niels, og Peder, samt Bendt Persen Søn af Peder Guttormsen Gjennestad 1 af Ole Clemmetsen Solbergs Sønner 2 af Gunder Guttormsen Stene sønner Anders Holtes Søn Niels 1 af Astri Lunnens Sønner og flere som er ubekjent for dere dog di første fra Christiansans Stift di er indskrevet for 3 Aar eller til Krigens Ende di haver 13 D. om Maaneden God Kost og Prektige Klæder. Gud staae dem bi i deres faaretagende.

Vi Lever for saa vidt taalig Rolig her nu for tiden endskjønt vi haver endnu nogle faae Røverbander og Hæste tyver i Nærheden her i Kansas di haver besøgt 2 Norske nemlig en Cresten Terkelsen hvor di tog 2 Mulesler og 1 Hest fra Osel Enges Svingersøn Lars Nielsen Haabersland for resten haver di været i Missouri hos Peder Nielsen Dolholt som jeg formoder dere kjender til er Slaveholder. Han mistede 6 Slaver og 3 Mulæsler til en Værdi af imellem 5 ad 6000 Dollars men nu hører vi han havde faaet en Kone med 2 Børn til bage.

Hover Larsen Stensvand med Famelie Lever meget væl og haver 3 Børn isammen for uden Marens Søn Hans som er meget Stor og flink efter sin alder, di haver 60 Acers Land og staa sig godt. Fra Anders Holte med kone maae jeg ogsaa hilse han Lever væl men hans kone er ikke Rask da hun falt og slog sig for lengere tid tilbage. Osul Enge Lever væl med Famelie vi var der oppe om Pinsedag i Besøg. Osul Løvaasen med Famelie Lever ogsaa væl han boer ogsaa her i Kansas. Hans Søn Osul Osulsen er bleven Gift for et Par Uger siden med et Amerikansk Fruentimmer han boer hos Faderen og er den Eneste han haver Hjemme hos sig endnu ... Peder Boer ogsaa her han Solgte i Missouri og Kjøbte igjen her 160 Acers di Lever alle vel med undtagelse af hans Kone som holder Sengen for bestandig det (?) haver omtrent vedvaret nu for 6 Aar.

Jeg vil her med slutte min Skrivelse for denne gang med en fligtig Hilsing til Eder alle og ønsket at disse Linier maatte indhente eder i Velbefindende. Hils alle baade Slægtninger og Venner fra os og ombedes du vil Skrive mig til med det Snarest

Niels Guttormsen

Eftersom at Paperet tillader vil mine Børn ogsaa Undertegne

Min Adresse er

Mr Nels Thompson

Doniphan County Kansas

Geary City P:O:

North Amerika

Gothorm Thompsom

Ose Thompson

Vi lenges efter at see eder men vi haaber engang at samles igjen

Engeborg Thompson

Translation, letter no. 16

I shall also send a letter to my brother Ole

Dear brother-in-law Even Hansen

About 2 years ago I sent you a letter from here, but have not received any reply, therefore I write anew, to see if this can be answered, or if you have completely forgotten us.

If you did receive my last letter, you have learned that I have sold my property in Missouri, and bought a new one in Kansas, where I now live. I sold my farm in Missouri for 1,100 dollars, and about 200 dollars for the crops. After that, I might have gone back to Norway, if I had been convinced that it would have been to my advantage, but I preferred to go to Kansas where I had better prospects, both for myself and my family.

So I bought new land here, namely 160 acres, for which I paid 1,500 dollars, but not the whole sum at once, so I still owe a little. I had money to pay with, but I figured I could spend the money more wisely by tilling the soil even more – here was only about 22 acres fenced in and ploughed, but very good land. Since then I have fenced in and ploughed about the same area, so that I now have cultivated 43 (?) to 44 acres, which is a lot more than one man can work. On March 9 it was two years since I moved from Missouri, the first year the crops were only so-and-so, but God be praised, I harvested enough to feed the cattle, but many got little, and not all because of a prolonged draught in the summer. Last year, however, we were well off.

I shall mention some of the seeds and the crops. I sowed 6 bushels or 1 ½ “tønde”⁶³ of winterwheat and harvested 167 bushels or about 42 “tønder”. The total harvest of spring wheat, rye and oats was 395 bushels or 99 “tønder”, in addition about 250 balls or 62 “tønder” of corn, or Indian corn, about 45 “tønder” of potatoes. I had sown about 6 to 7 acres with hemp, and I harvested 3 tons 313 lbs and in addition 6 “tønder” of hemp seed and also some other minor crops which are too cumbersome to list, so you might understand that when the

⁶³ 1 “tønde” = ca. 108 kg.

Lord gives us his blessing, it is a very fertile land. The winter crops look very good this year too, and the harvest will start in a couple of weeks, the second crop looks only tolerable as it is rather dry, but there is enough time yet if the Lord gives rain. I shall also inform you about the number of livestock we have, namely 2 horses and a foal, I have sold 2 milking cows with a calf last fall, I was paid 27 dollars for one, and 16 dollars for the second. In addition we have now 4 milking cows and oxen and young calves, in all 12. We have 17 pigs, one year old. There are few sheep here so far, though we have started to breed. I bought 2 sheep last fall at 5 dollars, which was a high price, but when we sheared the wool, we got 1 "bismal"⁶⁴ 1 lb of wool and this spring they had 3 lambs, so I hope to have a flock of sheep in due time. We also have a good many poultry, about 75 hens. I have also sold a foal after I came to Kansas, 35 dollars, 3 months old.

Concerning last year's hemp, we were unlucky. I had it transported to town untreated like many of my neighbours, but the times are difficult, the warehouses or the storage sheds were set on fire and everything burned up. The damage amounted to 4,000 dollars, but the same merchant had it insured for 1,500 dollars. In the first place, the hemp was lowly priced, namely 40 dollars a ton, and then it was destroyed by fire, but the merchant says he will pay us something, but I do not know how much, I hope he will compensate our loss.

When it comes to prices, they are very low on what the farmer has to sell, for example winter wheat is sold at 65 cents, spring wheat at 40, barley at 30, oats at 25, potatoes from 10 to 15 cents, hemp seeds at 1 dollar, everything pr. bushel, bacon at 4 to 5 cents, butter at 8 to 10, coffee at 25, sugar at 12 ½, rice at 10 cents, everything pr. lb, wheat flour 2 to 2 (?) dollars 50 cents pr. 100 lbs, molasses or sirup at 80 cents, liquor at 80, vinegar at 25 cents pr. gallon or about 4 "potters"⁶⁵. Clothes are very expensive because of the Revolution.

Concerning myself and my family, I must inform you about our sad situation, because we have lost one of our beloved children, namely Hans, who passed away to a better life on May 7 after a prolonged and painful illness. In the first place, he fell ill on January 7, 1861, and on the 9, same month, I sent for the doctor who for a long time came here every day, and during the whole period we contacted a doctor, namely 3 different ones, but of no avail. Around Easter 1861 there appeared a hole in his chest from which there flowed a great amount of pus,

⁶⁴ Probably 1 "bismerpund" = 6 kg

⁶⁵ 1 "pott" = 0,965 litre; one quart (US)

later more holes broke through, so at a time there were 7, all on the left side of the chest. Later on in the summer he recovered so that he might walk about, but he was very weak, and in such a manner it kept on until this spring at about Easter when all the children got the measles and he was also confined to bed, but in only a few days he got better and nearly came through – but suddenly the old illness came back and he was in bed for 5 days before he died. On his deathbed there were only 2 holes in his chest, but before he died one could feel his breath coming out through his chest, by which one might understand that there was no hope. The same evening he died, he told us 3 times that he must die the same night, he took our hands, and bade us all farewell. At 7 o'clock in the evening he passed away calmly, and joined death for the better. It is a heavy loss to see one's children pass away at a flourishing age like him, but we must reconsider and be thankful for God's providence, and he is blessed who has gone to the Valley of Death where there is no sorrow or complaint. We shall therefore conclude in the comfort that the Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of our Lord, if he had lived and come through his illness, he would have been crippled all his days since the left side of his shoulder and back had grown less –

The rest of my family, praised be God, all live well. We have 4 children alive, namely Aase, born on January 31, 1850, Guttorm, born on September 11 and baptized on October 17, 1853, Hans, born on June 7 and baptized on September 2, 1855, he was then 6 years and 11 months old the day he passed away, Elisebeth Gien (?), born on December 28, 1857 and baptized on August 15, 1858, Adeline Marie, born on October 12, 1860 and baptized on April 5, 1861.

Aase, as you know, was baptized in Norway, but Guttorm was baptized by a Norwegian ... as we had no minister. Hans was baptized in St. Joseph by a Presbyterian minister by the name of Smith. Infant baptism is used by them in the same manner as by our Lutheran ministers. Elisebeth was baptized in the school house by a minister named Davis. Adeline was baptized here in Kansas by Professor Larsen, from Christiansand, who has visited us here 3 times and bishop Prous once. Aase and Guttorm have attended school fairly often, so that Aase both reads and writes Norwegian and English, Guttorm, on the other hand, reads only English, though we have not had more than 3 months' school a year since we came to Kansas, but we hope it will improve.

I also want to tell you that we have fenced in a cemetery or burial ground, ½ acre, which Professor Larsen has consecrated for the Norwegians, and where there are already buried 8

persons. It is a beautiful place, about 1 ¼ Norwegian miles from here – We have also got an English Lutheran minister named Erharth, who seems to be a very godfearing and decent man whom we all respect and love, we have had him for 1 year, and shall have him for one more. 3 weeks ago we founded a Norwegian congregation, the twenty and some families in the neighbourhood, the same minister administers a church service every 4 weeks, Holy Communion twice a year, infant baptism and wedding seremonies when asked to, and he catechizes the youngsters after each sermon.

Concerning the American Revolutionary War, it rages on as you have probably learnt from the newspapers. Lately, there has been a fierce battle down in Virginia, outside the Confederate capital Richmond, where many thousand soldiers are killed on both sides, but we do not know who has won. We hope that the Union shall prevail, nearly all Norwegians here in Kansas are in favour of the Union, with the exception of some very few. Many Norwegians serve as soldiers, among others 3 of Osul Løvåsen's sons, namely Anders, Niels, and Peder, and also Bent Pedersen's son, Peder Guttormsen Gjennestad's son, Ole Clemmetsen Solberg's two sons, Gunder Guttormsen Stene's sons, Anders Holte's son, Niels, one of Astri Lunden's sons, and more who are unknown to you, though the first ones are from Christiansand diocese. (?) They are enlisted for 3 years, or until the end of the war. They get paid 13 dollars a month, have good provisions, and splendid clothes. May God be with them in their enterprises.

We live mostly calmly here these days, though we have had some few robber gangs and horse thieves in the vicinity here in Kansas. They have paid a visit to two Norwegians, namely one Kristen Terkelsen, where they stole 2 mules, and 1 horse from Osul Enge's son-in-law Lars Nielsen Haabesland,⁶⁶ for the rest they have been in Missouri at Peder Nielsen Dolholt's place, I presume you know he is a slave owner. He lost 6 slaves and 3 mules, worth 5-6,000 dollars, but now we hear that a woman with 2 children have been returned to him.

Hover Larsen Stensvand with family live well,⁶⁷ and have 3 children together, in addition to Maren's son Hans who is very big and clever for his age, they have 60 acres of land and are doing well. I also bring greetings from Anders Holte and his wife, he lives well, but his wife is not well because she fell and hurt herself some time ago. Osul Enge with family live well,

⁶⁶ Known in America as Lewis Nelson.

⁶⁷ Håver Stensvand, 1866. *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 14. Maren and Hans died in 1865.

we visited them at Whitsunday. Osul Løvaasen with family also live well, he lives here in Kansas. His son, Osul Osulsen, got married a couple of weeks ago to an American woman. He lives with his father, and is the only one he has left at home ... Peder also lives here. He sold his farm in Missouri and bought 160 acres here. They all live well with the exception of his wife who is confined to bed for ever, it ... has now lasted 6 years.

I hereby end my letter for this time with a dilligent greeting to you all, and wish that these lines must find you well. Give my regards to everybody from us, both relatives and friends, and prey write to me soon.

Niels Guttormsen⁶⁸

As there is space on the paper, my children would also like to sign

My address is	Gothorm Thompson
Mr. Nels Thompson	Ose Thompson
Doniphan County Kansas	We miss you, but we hope to be together
Geary City P:O:	once again
North America	Engeborg Thompson

APPENDIX A:

Letter no. 17

This is a translation of what is apparently a first draft of a letter in Peder Nelson's handwriting. It has probably been translated by Frank G. Nelson, and was found among the

⁶⁸ Emigrated in 1850.

papers left by Nora C. Nelson. It is undated and without salutation, and is written to the brother of the late Bent Taraldsen.⁶⁹

From: Peder Nelson

To: Ole Taraldsen, Landvik Parish, Norway

Date/ place: undated; St. Joseph, Missouri.

It has been a long time since I received a letter from you, sent to America by opportune ship, in which you ask me whether I am able to tell you anything about your brother. Osuld Enge's brother-in-law and daughter⁷⁰ who were living in Mobile several years ago say that they told you at that time of a recently dead Norwegian named Tomsen from Homborsund, who had also gone there with a flatboat – who, I assume, could have been Bent Taraldsen, the tailor, who called himself Tomsen there and came there with a flatboat. He had told that he had been married and separated from his wife; and, according to what Aase Enge says they told there, it must have been your brother. If he had not been the one, you would certainly have heard from him since then.

You also wanted to know something about religious customs here. They vary here according to the various sects; the practise of religion is free here and each man worships God in the manner he thinks best. Some receive communion at the altar, others not. Some have their children baptized, others not. Some shriek and moan in church as evidence of their repentance. Some let themselves be enrolled in churches in which they must not drink spirits, dance, or swear, unless they wish to be expelled from the church again. To be sure, they are not warned to attend church, but they are expelled by the society, and that is a disgrace, since attending church is regarded as a great honour and holy duty. Otherwise, they are not finicky about customs here. By and large, people are regular in church attendance and very religious.

In passing I will note that they do not hold feasts at weddings, or childbirth, or funerals. A good many neighbours and acquaintances ordinarily come to follow the corpse to the grave,

⁶⁹ In the *Iglandsættin*: 12, there is a reference to a Bent Taraldsen of Reddal, Landvik Parish. According to this record, Bent Taraldsen had one brother, Ole, also from Reddal.

⁷⁰ Aase, Osuld Nielsen Enge's daughter, had married Hans Arnesen Nilsen. Their daughter, Sarah, was born in Alabama in 1850, their next child in Missouri two years later. Jacob Nilsen, the brother of Hans, had married Alette Ommundsen in New Orleans in 1847; Alette was a sister of Gjertrud, the wife of Anders Nielsen Holte, Osuld Nielsen Enge's brother. That is probably why he is referred to as "Osuld Enge's brother-in-law and his daughter".

but afterwards, each one goes to his home. At weddings, for the most part, they do have a dinner, since they must have someone to marry them, and one or two witnesses; and some invite some of their friends, but music and dancing are not used. This, I maintain, is much more sensible than the Norwegian custom and it gives the young people less taste for carousing.

The better educated are more independent in their customs. As far as I know they are all Christians and avow the teachings of Christ; even the Mormons with their morals and customs which break with those teachings, call themselves Christians and God's own people. They live in polygamy and get people to believe that they are certain to be saved when they enter into it, since a Mormon can always take one with him into Heaven or forgive his sins. They have made some of it out of the Old Testament and some of Revelation, and it is written up in a book which they call the Bible of God and which was found in the earth and which has long been preserved for them. They have elders, prophets, temple and tabernacle and the Holy of Holies into which the prophet goes every morning to speak clearly with God while his wives wait in an adjoining room to witness that the prophet receives his orders from God, himself. If there is a man who has a wife who pleases the Prophet, he is ordered by God to hand her over. According to the newspapers, the Prophet had seventy children, which some people said happened all in one year.

Their society is based upon a sort of common property. Every advantage belongs to the Prophet and the Elders, and what they do not consume, is used to send out prophets to most parts of the earth in order to convince folk that they should enter into their unique holiness, and even though they tell people the grossest lies, they have collected thousands of them. (...) summer there came a great number from England and Denmark and some from Norway, and among them were supposed to be some rich people, and because of the common property they had, immediately upon leaving, to deliver all their money to the Prophet for holy use in Salt Lake on account of the community into which they had entered, and which, nevertheless, they will never get back. And if anyone should want to leave there, he will not get a shilling back if he has been quite wealthy ... and since Salt Lake is over 100 Norwegian miles from civilized regions, it is impossible for anyone to get away from there ...

... I imagine that if you could lie well enough you could start a new religion, the more unreasonable a one the better. People want to be cheated, and that way they would not have to bother to go to Salt Lake.

Letter no. 18

This is a draft translation found in the papers left by Nora C. Nelson in St. Joseph. The translation is done by Berit Guddal in Tvedestrand, Norway, in response to a letter from Anna M. Francis, Caldwell, Idaho (1993).

From: Guttorm Steanson

To: Relatives in Tvedestrand, Norway

Place/ date: East Norway, Doniphan County, Kansas, 1866-67

(Apparently this is not the beginning of the letter since it does not start with the customary greetings to the relatives).

I must here add that I did not take him there before he gave his approval to it, and not before I observed that he guessed he could not stand it any longer. For a while it went fairly well and I thought if he had been stronger and his lungs not so damaged, that the doctor could have cured his wounds, but a week before his death his lungs burst and there came a terrible bloodstained spout and pus and putrid pieces and it smelled. He kept on spitting blood and pus until the October 17, 1866, 9.30 in the night, when he died quietly.

May the Lord's great mercy be with him which he has given us by our Saviour through eternity and for ever peace. Yes, I thank the merciful Lord who ended his sufferings after such great patience. He was like a lamb – it was seldom to hear more than a sigh from him. It happened that his pain was unbearable, he gave a cry of pain. It hurt me so deeply in my heart that I have never been really happy during those two years, but I kept it to myself, and tried always to comfort him. I shall also add that when I had taken him to brother Ole, I had time to go home to my old mother.

But when he was taken more ill, I returned at once and was there the day before he died. I went straight to his bedside, took his hand and asked how he was feeling. He answered that he was better, but added "You cannot imagine how much I have suffered after you left me". Then I saw his face was marked with the trouble. I could not help my feelings, but I composed myself and comforted him with the Holy Scripture's promise for those who stay patiently in faith until the end. That seemed to comfort him. Now and again I spoke to him, and did what I could to prepare him for death. I reminded him of the necessity of prayer. He answered "I pray day and night".

No one can understand the happiness it was for me to hear this blessed statement from my dying father. He seemed to be quite content. I looked after him from the time I came until he died, except for a couple of hours from noon on. He had a great longing for me and was not pleased except when I was at his side. I saw that his departure was not far off. He was able to speak until 5 o'clock. The last words he uttered were "I will up and have my clothes on". He said it clearly.

After mother's request we took him to my place and buried him there. I shall add that the coffin cost 40 dollars and was lined with black velvet. The reason why I have written how we buried our father is because I think it will be of interest. I believe it is not known how a burial is done in this country. It is a custom among several to arrange a burial on the farm. I think it is good because the mortal remains should rest in peace where they are buried. That is difficult when they are buried in cemeteries, as in Norway.⁷¹

Mother lives well, praise the Lord.⁷² She is a bit weak now and then, but she is in charge of the household still. It seems she mourned more over your Thor's death than over father. It is not to be wondered since she carried the burden of the cross over so many years.

Aunt Karen lives with the same man still. I told so in my last letter. When I heard from her a time ago, she lived well and was in relatively good health.

⁷¹ Ole Steanson died in St. Joseph, Mo., and is buried in the small Norwegian cemetery in Moray (East Norway), Kansas.

⁷² His mother was Ingeborg Olsdatter.

Brother Ole and his Olava are well. They have two children, Peder Dolholt and Ida May. Ole still lives in Missouri, but talks about buying a farm here. If it happens, we shall be nearer each other. That should be nice for both of us. As it is now, we live 22 English miles apart.

Ole Eriksen and family live well.⁷³ Their six children are healthy, but Ole and Anne are not so strong. They have both been ill this winter, but they have recovered now. Both of them have weak chests. I wonder what will happen to them. Otherwise they are doing fine, and increase their wealth yearly.

I have now written to everybody in my family and now I beg you to read it with indulgence, what I have to relate about myself. It will take a considerable amount of reading and paper. I have endured a lot of sorrows and sufferings although the Lord has used trials and pains, he has also been my best healer. He also blessed me last year so abundantly that it is far beyond my expectations. The first six days of last year brought the best expectations, but on January 7, about twilight, the trial was there.

I was on a visit to my best friend, Olsen Dannevik.⁷⁴ He is a son of Olderman Dannevik, Lillesand. A son of his and I took our horses in order to visit one of the neighbours. On the road we rode a bit rough and tumbled. It was slippery and icy. The horse was a good one and well shod. I trusted the horse too much. I turned in speed around a corner and could not get the horse to slow down. Just as I turned, I fell off the horse sideways, and the horse's feet were pushed off, and I felt the horse fall on my left foot and it broke 3 inches above the ankle. I was taken back to the Danneviks.

The doctor came and my broken leg was bandaged. I was lucky to get a good doctor. I was eight miles from my home, and I knew that mother would be upset when she heard about it. I wrote to her, and she felt more relieved then. I had to remain on my back for three weeks, and all the pain I had cannot be described, and I shall not mention it. When I had been there four weeks, I had recovered so that I could be taken home. After five weeks I could walk the floor by help of crutches and the Lord be praised, I continued to recover. After three months I was able to limp around with a stick. All spring and a part of the summer passed before I could do anything. I thank God a thousand times. I am strong again, and walk as well as before.

⁷³ Ole Eriksen and family came to New York in 1850, on board the *Hermes*.

⁷⁴ Married to Sarah, Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven's daughter.

We have had a very good crop this fall. I harvested abundantly in wheat – 60 bushels, or the same as 150 “tønder”,⁷⁵ oats 100 “tønder”, corn 400 “tønder”. I have 14 acres of hemp, which is excellent. My hemp alone will make 10 or 11 hundred dollars. I have now 160 acres which are fenced in, and 140 acres under cultivation. I bought last fall, one year ago, 40 acres land next to me. I have 200 acres where I live.

I have also started a new house which will cost 2,000 dollars when I finish it. Outward it is finished, but the winter stopped me from doing more. In the spring I shall plaster it. It is a building with 7 rooms on the ground floor and two rooms on the loft. The basement is 16 feet square. It is constructed in an angle. The front is 36 feet wide and 16 feet deep and with two outside porches, one 8 feet deep and 20 feet long. The other 6 feet deep and 8 feet long. There are 10 doors and 12 windows. I have not anything else to tell, which will be of interest to you about myself.

Lars Nelson, brother of Niels Enge, died last year. The widow lives well, and can live without economic problems.

Osul Nelson Enge and his family live well. He is a wealthy man, but his health is not the best. He has a weak chest.

Political affairs have calmed down after the rebels were subdued. The Union Party took the reins all over the country. Things are as they should be, although there is a strong rebellious spirit in the south. They cannot do much harm as the liberal north stands as a wall against the riots. A storm of disturbance may blow against them, but as long as they have the spirit of patriotism, they can repeal whatever aristocratic army that attacks them because we feel like giants when it comes to the cause of freedom.

Do any of our relatives want to emigrate? Many emigrants make a good living if they only have the courage and a willing mind to emigrate. Here everyone who is capable can be rich if they wish so. Come and see if it is true.

⁷⁵ 1 “tønde/ tønne” = ca. 108 kg.

Since I have more space in my letter, I shall tell more about my own affairs. I run my farm with a good deal of machines. I plant my corn with a machine. I have also a reaper pulled by four horses to harvest wheat, oats, barley, hemp, and hay. It cost 210 dollars. A threshing machine is operated by 8-10 horses and stands on wheels so it can be moved from one place to another without trouble. Such a machine costs 700 dollars.

I can also inform you that pig breeding pays well. I sold 26 pigs last fall. They weighed from 200 to 400 "skaalpund".⁷⁶ I have 50 pigs to deliver next fall. I have a farmhand the whole year and pay him 200 dollars. Another day-worker is paid 1 dollar a day, except during harvest time when he gets 2 dollars a day and board.

Now I must end my simple writing for this time and with the best wishes to all relatives and acquaintances from us all

Guttorm Steanson

APPENDIX B:

Letters from California to family in St. Joseph

The following three letters were also found in the collection of notes left by Nora C. Nelson. The draft translations are probably by Frank G. Nelson and Nora C. Nelson. The letters are printed by courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO.

Letter no. 19

From: Nels Peter Nelson

To: Peder Nelson (his father), St. Joseph, Missouri

Place/ date: Placerville, Eldorado Co., California, February 10, 1852

⁷⁶ 1 "skaalpund" = 498 g.

Dear father Peder Nelson,

I received your very welcome letter of November 26th yesterday evening. I am very happy to hear a few words from you, since I have not been able to get any letters since the one of November 29th, 1850 which I received in April of 1851. So there is about a year between letters. But I see from this letter that you have written me several letters which I have not received, so I had almost lost hope of receiving any answer. I was certain that you had written to me, but I could not get any of them, and I certainly wish I could have. I see from your letter that last year was unusually wet and that there has been much sickness last fall which was the result of the heavy rainfall there. I see in your letter that you have been ill for seven weeks and that Olava and Maren were ill although they have not been bedfast long, all of which I am sorry to hear, but that they are well on their way to being well. I also note that the crops were poor last fall.

I have written several letters to you last summer, but I see that you have not received any of them, so what can have happened to them I do not know.

I must now say that I am in good health and have been here in California, so I must now praise California for a very healthful climate, and I even believe that it is more healthful here than it is in Missouri, so I believe that if you or all of you were here I do not think I would be very homesick for Missouri – not that I have anything against Missouri, but I still prefer California. Still, it is according to every man's taste and liking, since some prefer one place and some another, and that is just as well since otherwise some places would be overcrowded with people. But I think we ought to be contented wherever we are in the world, just as long as we good health and good prospects for the future. Since we all have to die sometime, wherever we are in the world, California cannot save you from that any better than any other place.

I see in your letter that snow has already fallen there. Snow is something we do not see much of here in California. We have not had any snow here this winter, and no frost of any significance. But we have not had rain either, apart from an insignificant amount, and that is a great misfortune for the gold miners here in this vicinity. I came here about three months ago, and I have not earned much since I came here because we have had too little rain. If we could have had enough rain here this winter I think I could have done tolerably well this winter here. I am working together with a young man from Buchanan County by the name of L.

Heffner; he came here to California with E. Jourdan from Raakhus Preerei (Rockhue's Prairie(?)). He went home last fall, as I have written in my previous letters, and if you happen to see him you must give him Heffner's and my greetings.

We are thinking of going home in the fall, and if we could have any luck here this winter then we were thinking of going home in the spring, which I do not think can come to anything now. But I have definitely determined to go home in the fall, whether I can earn any more or not, since I cannot have any luck here in California in struggling for gold. If I could have had good luck here, then I could certainly be worth three thousand dollars where I am worth a thousand now; that is about all I have now, so I think it is better for me to go home than to live here among Indians, gamblers, thieves, and robbers, which there are enough of here. But there is no danger here on account of them, if you are a little careful.

I can send greetings from Johannes⁷⁷ and Andreas.⁷⁸ They are well and are doing well. I have had several letters from them since I came here; they are in Grass Valley, and so is Anders Løvaasen and also ... Martin. I got a letter from him sometime back; he says that he has had very bad luck this winter and that he had spent 400 dollars this winter in connection with some claim he had. I had a share in the same claim, but I sold my share for one hundred dollars, which I am now very glad I did. It is about 75 miles to where they are and I have been thinking about going back there in the spring.

Torjus⁷⁹ and Gunder⁸⁰ I have heard nothing from for a long time. Ole Konnestad is about six miles from here. I was talking with him about seven days ago. I have not seen Vedel⁸¹ for about a year. Since then I have heard that he is ... up the American River. Hall, I have heard has gone home, and since I see that you have not received that power of attorney which he sent you to get Torjus to sign, I do not know what has happened, but I hope that Hall is home by this time and has the power of attorney in order.

I see that you ask me to give Doctor Donkin (Duncan?) your greetings, which I shall do when I go to Sacramento City. I hear that he has inquired about me and that he would very much like to see me, although I have never seen him as far as I know. From all that I have been able

⁷⁷ Johannes Haaversen Stensvand.

⁷⁸ Andreas Haaversen Stensvand.

⁷⁹ Torjus Gundersen Hardeberg ("Torjes Harrabor").

⁸⁰ Gunder Osuldsen Løvaasen.

⁸¹ Frederick Weddle (Clausen Vedel).

to learn, he is a very kind man and also a very good doctor; and I have heard that he is the best doctor in Sacramento City. And if I can send you some money I shall get him to help me to buy a money order, since I think he knows a lot about such things. That is one thing I do not have much knowledge about, and I would like to be able to get a man whom I could depend upon to get a money order with a safe company in order not to be wrecked. I know that there is a lot of swindling with them here and I know several people who have sent money home by money-order and have lost every bit of it, so I have worked too hard to let what I have earned go that way. And if it had not been for this reason, you could have gotten money from me long ago, since I have not had anything but trouble with it here. I have been hoping to send you some when the occasion arose, but I have not been able to get anyone to take it with him whom I could really trust, and besides, I thought I could get more for my gold ... to go down to Sacramento City. ... some money now ... but I am about fifty miles away, and besides, I cannot leave my work now. Otherwise I cannot say that I am earning very much now, but I have (hopes?) that we shall get some, so I think I can do all right here.

I see that you have heard a rumour that I have had comrades who have swindled me, something I do not know anything about. And I can say that ... I know of, but I have swindled myself several times, and I bought a claim last summer which I lost some money in which I think is the origin of this. I see that my paper is running out, so I must close my miserable letter for this time with loving greetings to all of you.

Nels P. Nelson

Letter no. 20

This draft translation is done in Frank G. Nelson's handwriting, who says that the letter is very hard to read, and that this draft is a condensed version. It is printed here by courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO.

From: Johannes Larsen Haaversen

To: Kittel Larsen Haaversen (his brother), St. Joseph, Mo.

Place/ date: Rough and Ready, California, April 18, 1851

Dear Brother Kittel Larsen,

I received your letter of January 8th, it made me very happy that you are all in good health. I can inform you that the same is the cure here. I can see from your letter that you have made a great change in that you are now married. Congratulations with your young wife.⁸² The same day I received a letter from C.S. Hardy.⁸³ We were afraid he had forgotten us. He is now about 60 miles from Sacramento City. He is doing very well there. The gold is better in He had gotten two of my letters – one from Andreas and one from Nels. He had not heard from Lars or Martin. His wife has been ill, and there is no doctor within 50 miles. He is thankful for the great favour you did him and says he will never forget it.

I have made about 300 dollars since I came here. And if luck is with me, it will be all set. So next winter should not be too hard for us. It is sad that I was not here when pay was even better. At Christmas I was with Nels and six boys from Kentucky. We had a dance that was said to be the best ever. People from all around came there.

I understand from your letter that a lot of Norwegians are coming in to Missouri now. That makes me very happy. I hope to see a lot of them here soon.

Now I must finish this epistle with the most sincere wish for your happiness and let me know when you hear from home. Greetings to parents, sisters, and brothers.

Johannes Larsen

Letter no. 21

From: Augustus Vedel (Weddle)

To: Peder Nelson

Place/ date: San Francisco, California, January 2, 1863

This is a translation from a Danish original, written by Augustus Vedel, or Claussen as he was known in Denmark. His son had gone to California in 1849, and it is likely that Augustus Vedel sold his property in St. Joseph around 1851 and followed Frederik. Mr. Vedel died in

⁸² Polly Kennard. They had five children.

⁸³ Married to Maren, Osul Nelson Enge's daughter.

San Francisco in 1874. The translation is done by Frank G. Nelson and Nora Nelson. It is printed here by courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO.

Dear Mr. Nelson,

A happy new year to you and your entire family. About a year ago I received a letter from you full of good news, that my son Frederik had married your youngest daughter and that they were getting along well. Right after receiving it, I wrote to you and asked you ... as I do now ... for a letter from my son, but I have not received any answer from either him or you, so I assume that the letter has not come to your attention, since I am fully convinced that neither you nor Frederik would have neglected to write to me if my letters had come to your attention.

Times in Missouri are scarcely such that one can call them even tolerable, are they? It is a sad fate, which it is vain to sigh over, and when and how will they be better? Scarcely in your or my lifetime. If you have the time, tell me a little in detail how things are going with you and all my former neighbours. I have often and bitterly regretted that I went to California and did not stay in Missouri where I had so many friends. All your children have now left you, or is Jørgen, perhaps, still at home. If he is still there, I will ask him to do me the favour of getting my books and especially the written documents delivered from Madame Keyser (or whatever her name) and save them for me until I can take care of them myself. This was my request in the letter I wrote a year ago, and since I have not received any answer my request has not reached you.

I had a position in the Marine Hospital, which was not a necessary post, and the government wants to close this position and I have now begun my former work, instruction in languages, mathematics, and accounting. Please send the enclosed letter to Frederik whose address I do not know, and if I am not troubling you too much please give me his address, or his wife's, so I can write to him directly. A Madam Nilsen, who in former time lived with Fowler in St. Joseph, told me that the young people had been blessed with a son, so now I am a grandfather.

Your good, kind, wife I hope you will greet from me and wish her a happy new year, and the same to your children. We are now in-laws and I am happy that my son has become a member of such a worthy family as yours. I must now close with a prayer that you, my honoured and

dear Mr. Nelson, will soon write to me a long letter on how things are going with you and all your children, and thereby put under even deeper obligation.

Your old friend

Aug. Wedel

My letters are to be addressed: A. Wedel, Care of Danish Consul, San Francisco.

APPENDIX C:

A letter from family and neighbours in Norway to immigrants in Missouri

Letter no. 22

This is also a partial translation of a letter in Norwegian found in the papers left by Nora C. Nelson. It is probably translated by Frank G. Nelson. The translation is printed by courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO.

From: Ingeborg Cathrine Kiedelsdatter

To: Kittel Larsen (Haaversen Stensvand), St. Joseph, Missouri (Lars Haaversen (Stensvand), wife and family)

Place/ date: Haabesland, Birkenes Parish, Norway, April 13, 1850

Dear friends, Lars Haaverson, wife and family,

Your letter dated Buchanan County, Missouri the 30th of November 1848 received.

I read this letter at Lillesand postoffice on the 10th of February 1849, and it cost 102 skillings to read. I would have written this long ago, but for lack of money it could not be done. From this letter of yours we can clearly see how your prosperity increases in every way, and that all with good health and all the good things for which the Most High is to be thanked that the heavy burden of the Northland has been removed from your shoulders, since there are plenty left who must complain and sigh under their burdens, but when we think the matter over we must endure all things with patience and receive everything as intended for the best.

Now I must turn to other things. Grøgaard at Lillesand has now taken upon himself to ship to Merchant Hedmark of Lillesand; Peder Evensen ... Kiland is leaving behind both wife and

children; Ole Knudsen Haabesland here has gotten 50 “speciedaler” from brother Niels who is now living in Illinois; Osuld Løvdalen has also sold his farm and wants to go, but his wife has been taken ill and is bedfast so he will not get off this time.

As for the other changes in the neighbourhood since you left, I must report some of the most important things. I must mention a few of those who have passed away: Old ... Haabesland, Iver Ørland (?), Ingeborg Bakken (?), Andreas Ørland (?), Elias Triels (?), Tellef Christensen Flaae, Torjus Tellefsen Rislåa had to end his days in the waves at Topdalsfjorden the night between the 9th and 10th of June 1849, together with a Danish skipper, Gunder Halvorsen Rislåe and Ole Nielsen Flaae who died this winter in the month of January. Daniel Tønnesen died now in March of this year and in his chest was found 17 thousand in gold coins and 23 thousand in silver and paper money. Thus the money which brought about the farmers’ destruction lay without use.

Likewise, many here have married. Salve Syvertsen has married Ellen Rislåa, as you perhaps have heard, since it was over two years ago. Tønnes Tveten and Gunder have each gotten his sister at Stensland, Anne and Aase. Torjus Holte has married Grete Solberg. Tone Holte married a bachelor from Herefoss ... changes in our district. Salve Syvertsen has bought ... old farm at Stensvand and is living there. Bent Holte has sold Hagestad to Mads Birkenes for 650 “speciedaler” and Christian Trielskaar (?) has bought Birkenes for 900 “speciedaler”. Torjus Holte has sold his farm to his son Bent. Now he has his uncle’s entire farm. Torjus has bought the meadows for 250 “daler”. These farms changed hands now this winter. Ole Christensen Heimdal went to America in the summer of 1848. And last summer Ole Løvdalen got a letter from him saying that he had gone to Wisconsin and there had bought so much land as he could possibly manage and in addition would meet him in New York to help him into the country if he should be in need of money, but now he cannot get off with the first sailing as is mentioned earlier.

A letter came here from Kittel to Salve Syvertsen which said that I should have a sister’s share as a gift from you, since I had my hard fall and that this was in the keeping of Elias Flaae, Andreas Tjemsland and Elias Herlofsen. But this debt is not to be had; when they would not pay it to you while you were here yourself, they will certainly not pay it to me, for now there is poverty everywhere. Elias Flaae had two auctions this last fall and all of his

movable property was sold, together with his stock and foodstuffs. Things are in bad shape with Andreas Tjemsland

We have gotten new from you through several letters, which have come to Norway, but now this winter we got a letter from Osul Enge written to his brother who lives in Fjære Parish. We hear that you are all well and that Christian⁸⁴ has gone to California to the gold mines together with a number of other neighbour boys. He had earned much before, but with this work he will earn great wealth if he lives and keeps his health. A sailor who lives in Arendal came home; he has been at sea for eight years, but was at the gold mines on his last trip. He had accumulated a fortune of 18 to 20 thousand, almost all of which he acquired at this work. He is a son of Parelius Karlstrøm.

Last winter, 1849, was an especially good winter here. The snow was not so deep here in the south of Norway and people could drive where they would with a full load, and the ... especially free from extreme cold. But north of the mountains it was a destructive winter; many farms were destroyed, especially by avalanches Spring was early, but unusually cold, so that in the middle of the summer one could rest in the midday sun and not be the least warm. The fall was also cold and the potatoes froze in the ground for almost everyone before they got them dug, and then they were nearly all spoiled. A month before Christmas snow and real cold set in and lasted until February of this year. Then the weather became milder and the snow melted a lot until the beginning of March when snow and extreme cold began again and were still worse than we had before from the fall on. Here is a great lack of food for the animals everywhere, and on that account ...

In Denmark and Holstein there is a war between Prussia Germany and the Danes. This war is being carried on with unusual force on both sides, but also with unusual losses since neither of them won any victories but a great number of people have perished. At last they made an armistice for six months and when they had passed again there was six months of quiet, but when this is past all of the powers of Europe are certainly going to bestir themselves.

This war has no influence in our country, but nevertheless we have very poor times here. Prices are quite dead and there is nothing for the working man to earn. The best and the

⁸⁴ Christian Haaversen/ Hoverson; died in California ca. 1850.

strongest men offer themselves to work for eight to ten skillings a day and yet cannot get the money ... and if this is going to last long the farmers will be quite ruined and the country will hasten to its doom.

As far as we are concerned, our circumstances are poor; and since no one can earn anything nothing else can be expected. But the worst of all is that we cannot get clothing either for ourselves or for our children. Our food is only bread and we thank God for it. If we can get it, we shall not suffer hunger, and here are many of us in the same circumstances. Now your worries about your livelihood are changed to abundance, you are perhaps struggling to collect wealth as is the nature of everyone here in this life. It is my highest wish to hear more of your increasing prosperity. But you have perhaps not yet forgotten us with your help. We shall never hope to come to you, but if you of your kindness and feeling of kinship should send us something we should be most grateful from the depths of our hearts; we have not anything else to pay with in this life, but on the other side of the grave will be an unforgetting reward.

A few words to my sister Christiane Kiddelsdatter.⁸⁵ Dear sister, you have gone so far away from me that I can never again enjoy your company in this life. When I think back upon the days of our youth which so quickly vanished, those innocent days without toil or worries together with each other and with our parents, it all seems like a dream, especially since everything afterwards became more and more difficult. And now it is with joy that I think of you in your old age having a quiet life without sorrow, but your absence is unforgettable. There is no one who cares about the sorrow of the poor. But I must thank God for my daily bread and close my eyes in death among the cliffs of Norway.

Perhaps this is the last heartfelt greeting from your unforgetting sister

Ingeborg Chathrine Kiedelsdatter

... no more this time than to write a line to you, but wait to get a few words from you in return. It is our greatest pleasure to hear news of you. Our best greetings to all of you from all of us. Farewell, farewell,

Haabesland, the 13th of April, 1850

⁸⁵ Married to Lars Haaversen Stensvand.

APPENDIX D:**A Welcome Home Song for Osuld Nilsen Enge⁸⁶**

Welcome home song to Osuld Nilsen Enge, who returned home to visit his brothers, sisters, and relatives after having spent 25 years in America. Osuld Nilsen was born at Igland in 1802, lived at Enge in Eide Parish until his departure in 1846, when he sold his farm to Mr. Enge, present Member of the Storting. Osuld first lived in Missouri for 15 years. He then moved to Kansas where he purchased land for himself and his seven children. He has now helped them along to make a living, and has himself a property worth about 30,000 dollars.

Nils Pedersen Igland

Welcome home to the old fatherland!

Welcome to you, our brother, friend, and cousin!

Be thanked for returning as an old man

To the ancestral home!

It was here that your heart started beating

It was here that you saw the first light of day

It was here that you came to know life.

You must recognize these old, high mountains

The valleys, hills, and groves.

Though, time makes changes, as you well will see,

And many things are lost beyond recognition.

But there is one thing you will happily recognize to day.

The good, old, warm, and joyous feelings

Which are never lost in the stream of time.

We do remember the day you left our country.

We thought we would never see you again.

But you pushed on with an iron hand and led the way for others

⁸⁶ By courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO. My translation.

*To make a better living in this earth.
You fought your way and finally reached your goal,
And now we see your faithfulness as a true son of Norway.
You never forgot your home country in the north.*

*Let us drink to you and sing a merry song!
Let the song resound in your ancestral home!
In joy let us empty our cup,
While our song rings out to your praise.
Welcome to you, yes, welcome in our company!
This is a day of celebration.
We rejoice, both old and young!*

PART FOUR:

INDEX:

**EMIGRATION FROM
HOMMEDAL PARISH
TO AMERICA, 1840 - 1930**

State of Missouri

SCHEDULE I. - Free Inhabitants in Washington Township, in the County of Buchanan, State of Missouri, enumerated by me, on the 19th day of October, 1850. 48

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No.	Name of Person	Sex	Age	Color	Profession, Occupation, or Trade of such Male Persons over 15 years of age	Value of Real Estate owned	Place of Birth		Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict
							Name of State, Territory, or Country	Whether within the limits of any other Territory or State	
	Richard A. Baker	m	15	w			Mo		
	Richard	f	12	f			"		
160	William Pullen	m	4	w			"		
	Helene Linders	w	25	w			Germany		
	Olson Linnick	m	28	w			"		
	Sarah	f	26	f			"		
	Peter	m	4	w			"		
	Matthew	m	7 1/2	w			"		
161	W. H. Pappiger	m	41	w	Farmer	4000	Den		
	Richard	m	32	f			"		
	John	m	16	w			Ig		
	Clara	w	8	w			"		
	Rufus	m	7	w			"		
	Sarah	f	3	f			"		
	Mayant	f	1	f			"		
	George Jones	m	32	w			"		
	Lightner Jackson	m	34	w			Den		
	Levy Wagner	m	18	w			"		
162	John Wood	m	52	w		3000	Ig		
	Harvey	m	37	f			"		
	Martha	f	31	f			"		
	Wesley	m	19	w			"		
	Callahan	m	17	f			"		
	Thomas	m	9	w			"		
	George	m	3	w			"		
163	John P. Wood	m	28	w	" (Rent)		"		
	Eliza	f	23	f			Den		
164	Peter Nelson	m	56	w	Farmer	10000	Germany		
	Caroline	f	55	f			"		
	Sarah	f	26	f			"		
	Eliza	f	24	f			"		
	William	m	32	w			"		
	George	m	20	w			"		
	Olson	m	19	f			"		
	Christina	w	17	f			"		
	David Olson	m	16	w			"		
	Olson Nelson	m	12	w			"		
	Olson Jones	m	25	w			Den		
165	James Peter	m	25	w	" (Rent)		Germany	59	
	Eliza	f	24	f			"		
	Carry	f	1	w			"		
	Caroline	f	1	w			"		

2 Nov
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Census Returns, 1850; Washington Township, Buchanan County, MO. Peter Nelson and family are found at nos. 654-655. Paper edition, St. Joseph Library, St. Joseph, MO.

EMIGRATION FROM HOMMEDAL PARISH (LANDVIK AND EIDE SUB-PARISHES) TO AMERICA, 1840-1930

In a modern perspective, registration and control over emigration and immigration are fairly easy and obvious. But even as late as the 1870s when police authorities in Norwegian ports began controlling the flow of emigrants and register them in the so-called *Emigrant lists*, figures are sometimes scantily recorded, and the exact number of emigrants is nearly impossible to establish. One reason is of course a system which in the beginning was imperfect and loosely founded. Emigration figures from the Grimstad district are, however, of an uncertain character, since the town and its district came to be a hub in Norwegian shipping activities.

A logical and practical consequence of these activities, was that transportation across the Atlantic was easy and frequent. Neither owners nor ship's masters seem to have had any qualms about taking onboard unregistered passengers. The exact number of such unofficial emigrants is highly uncertain, and constitute a grey zone in the registration of emigrants.

Migration scholars have also established the fact that a large number of Norwegian sailors deserted their ships in American ports. Bearing in mind the importance of shipping in the local economy, there were undoubtedly many seamen from the Grimstad-district among the deserters. The high wages on American ships were tempting, and many sailors gave in to that temptation. In a report from 1894, *The Commission of Navigation* maintained that 4/5 of the crews on American ships in coasting trade were Scandinavian. Knut Gjerset says that 22,000 Norwegians worked on American ships in 1893.¹ On the other hand, Ingrid Semmingsen claims that 11,200 Norwegian seamen deserted their Norwegian ships in the period 1871-1880.² In letters from America around the turn of the century, the picture is the same: ships are left idle in American ports following the desertion of the crew. With an evident sigh, one writer remarks: "5 sailors have run away".³

In the present index, covering the period 1840 to 1930, the question of reliability is of course important. In general terms, the years up to 1874 offer greater problems as to finding

¹ Knut Gjerset. *Norwegian Sailors in American Waters* (Northfield, MI: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1933): 82.

² Ingrid Semmingsen. *Veien mot vest*: 420.

³ Erik Aalvik Evensen. *Amerikabrevene*: 25.

trustworthy sources than the following years when police authorities recorded embarkation in their so-called *Emigration lists*. The registrations at *Ellis Island* from 1892 would then normally confirm the entries in the Norwegian lists. On this background, I have chosen to build upon the Emigration lists, and have used manuscript recordings from 1874 to 1930, deposited in Statsarkivet/ *State Archives*, Kristiansand.

The establishment of emigration lists from the pioneering years, is in all respects a question of balance. Several sources are available, but may prove of doubtful character if used alone and without links or confirmation from other sources. Church records and passport protocols are of course important, but we do know of cases where people were registered and got their passports without ever leaving the country. In addition, officials in charge of the recordings sometimes fell to the temptation of sloppy recordings.

There also exists a variety of local sources, private archives often based on official documents, but certainly with elements of family tradition and valuable collections of letters and keepsakes. In this category one might also place publications from various local historical societies.

On the American side, Gerhard B. Naeseth's two volumes on Norwegian migration are of major interest. In his work, also bringing into account traditional Norwegian sources, confirmation of actual arrival in America is established through "findings" on headstones in American graveyards. Helge Ove Tveiten's correspondence with Professor Naeseth is fully treated in his major thesis.

Emerging from American soil are also the letters from the pioneers, where the information about identified settlers is in all probability trustworthy.

In the last analysis, the collection of often minute details in an emigration register becomes a process of assessment and balance. It is hard, if not impossible to find and cement the ultimate and correct register; the information given is sometimes simply too uncertain, or even unlikely. The abiding principle is therefore: sources must be connected and compared, and the more pulling in the same direction, the better. The isolated – and perhaps contradictory – source, is of course of marginal value. On this background, this present index does not pertain to be perfect or final, and is certainly open to additions and improvements.

In this register, sources are given after each name up to 1874. About a dozen names remain unidentified and are not included, since they are only mentioned in Johan Tveite's books and may possibly be from a later date than 1930.

The following sources have been used:

- Kirkebøker/ *parish records*; Statsarkivet, Kristiansand/ *State archives*.
Passprotokoller, Nedenes Fogderi/ *passport lists/ protocols*; Statsarkivet, Kristiansand/ *State archives*.
- Bjerke, Robert A. *Manitowoc-skogen* (Manitowoc, WI, 1994).
- Naeseth, Gerhard B. *Norwegian Immigrants to the United States. A Biographical Directory, 1825-1850* (Volumes I- II, Madison, 1993-97).
- Tveite, Johan. *Landvik, I- II* (Landvik Historielag, 1961) (*Landvik Historical Society*).
- Anna M. Francis. *Norwegian Immigrants and Their Ancestors, Doniphan County, 1874-1924, I, II, III* (Caldwell, Idaho, 1993, 1995, 1998); collection of newspaper articles/ clippings, privately published.
- Nora C. Nelson, St. Joseph, MO, notes and various materials (unpublished).
- Bendixen, Anna Igland. *Et 150-års minne, I- II* (unpublished pamphlets deposited at Grimstad Bibliotek, 1996) (*Grimstad Public Library*). A copy of Peder Kalvehaven's passenger list from 1846-47 is presented in the pamphlets.
- Igland, Nils. *Slægtsregister vedkommende Iglandsætten/ Family register* (1898), (Grimstad Bibliotek/ *Grimstad Public Library*).
- Kiland, Nere. Family archives (private).
- Stalleland, Kristen. *Våre folk i Amerika* ("Our people in America") ; undated and partly unidentified articles, partly published in *Grømstadposten* in the 1920s, and collected in *Stalleland-arkivet; private collection/ archives*.
- Sigrun and Olav Uldal. "Emigranter fra Grimstad 1844-1850" *Utvandrernummer* 30 (Selskapet for Grimstad Bys Vel, 1975): 15-44.
- Tveiten, Helge Ove. *En utvandring blusser opp – og slokner. Sørlandsk emigrasjon på 1800-tallet* (Hovedoppgave i historie, 1974 I) (*Major thesis, University of Oslo*); also the correspondence between Tveiten and Naeseth included in the thesis.

- References in letters from the emigrants: *Letters from the Pioneers*, nos. 1- 22.
- Passenger list, the *Izette*, supplied by the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC: M 272, Quarterly Abstracts of Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New Orleans, LA, 1820-1875, Roll 4.⁴
- Passenger lists supplied by the National Archives, Washington DC: the *Hermes*, New York, May 29, 1850, M 237, roll 89; the *Ancona*, New Orleans, October 20, 1847, M 259, roll 21; the *Amerika*, New Orleans, November 7, 1850, M 272, roll 7. The *Nordpolen*, New York, September 20, 1850; partly confirmed in local sources/tradition.
- *Norway – Heritage: Hands across the Sea*, www.norwayheritage.com
- Census Returns, Missouri and Kansas, 1850, 1860, 1865, and 1870.⁵
- Burial records, Buchanan County, MO. and Doniphan County, KS. (Surveys in Public Libraries, St. Joseph, MO and Troy, KS).
- Headstones in the cemeteries in St. Joseph, MO and Moray, KS (East Norway) (in particular the Nelson Cemetery and the Steanson/ Erikson/ Nelson Cemetery).

For the period 1844-1854 some emigrants from other parishes than Landvik and Eide are included because of strong ties to the Iglund family in particular. These emigrants are marked with an asterix (*); they were in the main residents in the surrounding parishes: Fjære, Birkenes, Froland, Øyestad and Herefoss.

⁴ The ship manifest record is not accurate. In the main it confirms Peder Kalvehaven's handwritten copy, but some of the children are not registered. Their arrival at New Orleans is confirmed in other sources (e.g. letters and later census returns).

⁵ Paper issues at St. Joseph Library, St. Joseph, MO., and Troy Library, Troy, KS. A digital version is found at: <http://persi.heritagequest.com> (Accessed July, 2006).

A. EMIGRATION FROM LANDVIK PARISH, 1840 - 1930

1840

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere

1841

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere

1842

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere

1843

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere

1844

*Beruld Christensen Fiskvatvøy (Øyna); resident in Froland Parish; went to Port Washington, Wisconsin
married to Odborg Nielsdatter Fiskvatvøy

Christen (son)

Johanna Guri (daughter)

Berthe (daughter)

Amund (daughter)

Nils (Neam) (Kristenson) (minister in St. Joseph, Missouri, 1879)

(Tveiten, thesis: 131; passport protocols; *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 13*; Stalleland: 1).

Salve Tallaksen Igland (1805 – 1881); went to Wisconsin, later Minnesota;

married first time to Berthe Ommundsdatter Heimdal, died 1843;

married second time (in the USA) to Birthe Halvorsdatter Kiland (1822 – 1906); emigrated 1849

Tallak (son)

Ingeborg (daughter)

(Gunhild Oline (daughter); came over in 1849)

(Naeseth: 63; Tveite, Landvik, II: 24; Tveiten, thesis: 133; parish records, Landvik; passport protocols; Kiland, *archives*; Wisconsin Census Returns, 1860).

Beruld Baardsen Bjørkos Hunland (1807 – 1891); went to Wisconsin;

married to Ragnild Thorsdatter Grinnevold (1819 – 1892)

Anna (Froland) (1847 -); married to Peter Olson Froland (six children)

(Naeseth: 63; Tveite, II: 61; parish records, Landvik; passport protocols, Stalleland: 6; Wisconsin Census Returns, 1860).

(Anders Nilsen Gusdal (1804 -))

(Tveite, II: 36)

Osuld Terjesen (-); went to Wisconsin

(Wisconsin Census Returns, 1860; Carlton C. Qualey, *Norwegian Settlement in the United States* (Northfield 1938): 63).

1845

Ole Johnsen Grundevaslien (Grindevoldslie) (1795 -)

(Naeseth: 197; correspondence Naeseth - Tveiten; passport protocols)

(Also registered in 1846; probably applied for passport in 1845, but emigrated in 1846).

1846

This is the group of 79 emigrants who left Norway on the *Grethe Lovise* in 1846, transferred to the *Izette* in France, and finally reached New Orleans in 1847. The names are copied from Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven's handwritten passengerlist,⁶ and with additional information from studies by Nora C. Nelson,⁷ Kristen Stalleland, Anna Igland Bendixen, Gerhard B. Naeseth, Helge Ove Tveiten, Johan Tveite, Nere Kiland, parish records/ passport protocols, references in *Letters from the Pioneers*, and the ship manifest record from the *Izette*.⁸ The information is mostly confirmed in the Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO.

The passengers on board the *Izette* are printed in **bold** type.

***Knut Håversen Østerhus** (1806 – 1847), a farmer; from Stensvand, Birkenes Parish; died in New Orleans, 1847

married to **Astrid Ivarsdatter Lunden** (1804 -); went to Missouri, later Kansas; died in St. Louis

Helmer (son) (Hjalmar)(1836 -); probably served in the Civil War (Union), not confirmed in Army records.

Ivar (son) (Edward, Ed)(1839 -); married to Mary Mackney; moved to St. Louis

Ole Nicolai (son)(1841 -)

Anne Kristine (1844 - 1878) (daughter); married to Frank Fitzpatric

(Naeseth: 35; Tveite, *Landvik, II*: 210; Tveiten, *thesis*: 133; parish records, Landvik; passport protocols; *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 1*; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO).

Else Anstensdatter Skiftenes Østerhus (1799 – 1847); maid servant with the Østerhus family; died in 1847, New Orleans

(Naeseth: 35; Tveite, *Landvik, II*: 205; parish records; Stalleland: 6).

***Gjerulf O. Nævisdaleia** (Nævresdalen/ Nævisdalen) (1825 – 1847); a farm-hand; related in some way to the Østerhus family; resident in Øyestad Parish; died in New Orleans, 1847

(Naeseth: 35; parish records, Øyestad).

***Peder Nielsen (Igland) Dolholt Kalvehaven** (1794 – 1884); a farmer and boat-builder at Homborsund, Eide Parish; went to Missouri; buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph

married to **Karen Marthea Olsdatter Bjerke** (1794 – 1875); buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph

Aasille Elise (daughter) (1826 – 1873); married to James Pettis (1817 – 1898); buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph

Nels (Niels) Peter (son) (1829 – 1888); married to Inger Tomine Håversen Stensvand; buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph. A fruit farmer in Weston, MO

Jørgen A. (son) (1830 – 1903) (“George Nelson”); married to Aase Guttormsen Thompson Gjennestad (1850 – 1890); emigrated 1850 on the *Nordpolen*; both buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph. 6 children: Irene Mabel, Newton, Orion Clarence, Thomas, Henry, and Harry Alfred

Olava (Olave) (Laura) (daughter) (1832 – 1921); married to Ole S. Stiansen (1830 – 1913); both buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph. Went to Kansas for three years with her husband, then returned to her father's land in Missouri in 1863; 4 children: Kate Sophronia, Emma Olava, Ida Olena, and Peder Dolholt

Maren Christine (daughter) (1834 – 1913); married to Fredrick Weddle (Clausen Vedel) (1829 – 1901); Weddle was attached to a Government office in Washington D.C. during the Civil War; he was in charge of Union railroad transportation to and from the capital. Both buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph. 3 daughters: Charlotte Amelia, Martha Ellen, and Nelle Christine.

Eldest daughter Sara (1824 – 1854) came over in 1850; married to Ole Mathias Olsen Dannevig (1822 – 1894); buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph; 3 sons: Mathias, Peter, and William.

⁶ By courtesy of Anna Igland Bendixen, *private collection*.

⁷ By courtesy of Jane Nelson Thompson, St. Joseph, MO, *private collection*.

⁸ *Quarterly Abstracts of Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving in New Orleans, LA, 1820 -1875*, Roll 4 (M 272), National Archives, Washington D.C.

(Tveite, II: 120; Naeseth: 38; Tveiten, thesis: 130; parish records, Landvik; passport protocols, *Letters from the Pioneers*, nos. 1, 8; *Iglandsætten*: 8; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO; notes from Nora C. Nelson).
Ole Johnsen Grindevoldslie (Grundevasllien) (1795 -); a farm-hand; destiny unknown (also listed 1845) (Naeseth: 38; correspondence Naeseth -Tveiten; passport protocols).

***Osuld Nielsen (Igländ) Enge** (1802 – 1880); farmer at Enge, Eide Parish; went to Missouri, later Kansas (claimed land in 1856); buried at Moray, KS

married to **Gunnhild Terjesdatter Håland** (1804 – 1867); buried at Moray, KS

married second time to Anne Pedersdatter (1828 -); widow after Guttorm Osuldsen (3 children)

Aase (daughter) (1827 – 1903); died in East Norway/ Moray, KS; married to Hans Arnesen Nilsen, a seaman from Kristiansand

Gurine (daughter) (1829 – 1907); died in East Norway/ Moray, KS; married to Lars Nielsen Håbesland (Lewis Nelson) (1822 – 1866); 7 children: Amelia Gusta, Nicholas, Julia, Oscar, Mary Jane, Louisa Theresa, and Margaret Gurina

Maren (daughter) (1831 – 1902); died in East Norway/ Moray, KS; married to Charles Hardy (from Virginia), a shopkeeper; 10 children

Trine (daughter) (1834 – 1868); died in East Norway/ Moray, KS; married to Samuel Hardy (from Virginia)

Terje (Tyra) (son) (1839 – 1919); settled in Nebraska; died in New Mexico; buried in Nebraska; married to Mariette Donnison; served in the Civil War (Union): corporal with the 13th regiment Kansas Voluntary Infantry, comp. C.⁹

Nels Gustav (son) (1846 – 1929) (known as “little Nels”); married to Margaret Andrews; Kansas, later settled in Nebraska

Gusta (Augusta) (daughter) (1850 – 1924); buried in St. Joseph; married to Ebert Simon, a Methodist; came to Kansas in 1867; Township Clerk, East Norway; 3 children

Osul Thompson (son) (1850 -); married to Jacobine Nelson Thompson

Peter Thompson (son) (1860 -); married to Mary Nelson Thompson

Ingeborg (daughter) (1865 -)

(Naeseth: 38; Tveite, Landvik, I, 405, II: 120; Tveiten, thesis: 129; parish records, Eide; passport protocols; *Letters from the Pioneers*, nos. 1 – 5, *Iglandsætten*: 6; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO; Census Returns, Doniphan County, KS, 1860, 1865, 1870).

***Lars Haaversen Steensvand** (1782 – 1869); a farmer; resident in Birkenes Parish; went to Missouri; buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph

married to **Kristianne Kittelsdatter Slettene** (1797 – 1883); buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph

Kiedel (Kittel) Tobias (son) (1819 – 1892); married to Aasille Andrea Nelson (Rørmoen)

Haaver (Hover) (son) (1822 – 1901); married first time to Maren Hansdatter Ørteland, widow after Nicolai Thompson; married second time to Ellen Christine Jacobsen, widow after Jacob Aagesen; buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph

Christian (son) (1825 – ca.1850); killed while digging for gold in California

Johannes (son) (John) (1829 – 1902); married first time to Celia A. Nelson, second time to Anne Mari Clemetson; prospecting for gold in California, 1850; came to Kansas in 1869; 6 children

Andreas Arup (Andrew) (son) (1832 – 1881); married to Eliza Wilson; buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph

Inger Tomine (daughter) (1838 – 1927); married to Nels P. Nelson, Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven's son; buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph

(Naeseth: 39; Tveiten, thesis: 133; parish records, Birkenes; passport protocols; *Weekly Kansas Chief*, July 24, 1873; *Letters from the Pioneers*, nos. 1, 2 and 10; Uldal: 41; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO; notes from Nora C. Nelson).

***Christen Halvorsen Helleren** (1821 -); (Kristian?; Cristen Bjellandslien?); a farm-hand; resident in Øyestad Parish

(Naeseth: 39; parish records; *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 1).

***Hans Omundsen Espægren** (1825 – 1847), a farmer; resident in Birkenes Parish; (sisters: Alette and Gjertrud Espægræn (Gjertrud was Anders Holte's first wife)); died in New Orleans, 1847

(Naeseth: 35; parish records, Birkenes; *Iglandsætten*)

⁹ Searches for Norwegians in service in Missouri or Kansas during the Civil War have been done in <http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/soldiers/> and *Records of soldiers in the Civil War*, Troy Library, Troy, KS. Some details are also found in William Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas*; <http://www.kanoll.org/books/cutler/doniphan/doniphan-co-p4.html> (Accessed July, 2006).

***Aanen (Anund) Torkildsen Iveland** (1818? -); a farm-hand; resident in Iveland Parish; Knud's brother went to Petersberg, Illinois.

(Naeseth: 35; correspondence Naeseth - Tveiten).

Gunder (Gunnar) Halvorsen Kiland (1823 – 1886); a farmer; went to Manitowoc, Wisconsin; later married to Gunnhild Torjusdatter (O. Torrison's sister; O. Torrison was born at Rosaasen, Herefoss Parish)

(Naeseth: 35; Tveite, Landvik, II: 104; Tveiten, thesis: 133; passport protocols; Uldal: 40; Bjerke: 65).

Torjus Gundersen Hardeberg (Torjes Harrabor) (1827? -); a farm-hand; went to Missouri

(Naeseth: 36; parish records, Landvik; passport protocols; *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 1*).

***Knud Torkildsen Iveland** (1824 -); a farm-hand; went to Petersberg, Illinois; resident in Iveland Parish; Aanen's brother

(Correspondence Naeseth – Tveiten).

Bent Hansen Molland (1810 -); a shoemaker; went to Missouri

married to **Trone (Tonje) Løvorsdatter** (1802? - 1847), died in New Orleans, 1847

Ingeborg (Christine) (daughter) (1834 - ?); married to Albert Albertson, Troy, Kansas; a Danish farmer; served in the Civil War, chief mate on transport steamer *Louisiana*; wounded

Octave (daughter) (1836 - ?); married to – Hartman, California

Mathilda (daughter) (1839 - ?); married to – Delseries, New Orleans

Bergette (Getta) (daughter) (1844 – 1924); unmarried teacher in Troy, Kansas

One daughter adopted away (St. Louis ?)

(Naeseth: 39; correspondence Naeseth -Tveiten; parish records, Landvik; *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 7*; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO; Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas*).

***Alette Omundsdatter Espægren** (1831 -); a maid servant with Anders Nielsen Iglad; resident in Birkenes Parish; married in New Orleans to Jacob Arnesen Nilsen from Kristiansand; moved to San Francisco

(Naeseth: 304; correspondence Naeseth -Tveiten; parish records, Birkenes; *Iglandsætt*).

***Anders (Andreas) Nielsen Iglad Holthe** (1809 – 1887); a farmer; resident in Birkenes Parish; went to Missouri

married to **Gjertrud Omundsdatter Espægren** (1814 – 1847); died in New Orleans, 1847;

later married to Anne Ivarsdatter Lunden; emigrated 1850 on the *Hermes*

Grete Marie (daughter) (1842 – 1919); married to Arthur Spencer, Kansas; buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph

Oriella Bergetta (daughter) (1842 – 1847) (died on a riverboat); buried at Weston, MO

Nels Olaus (son) (1844 – 1922); married to Almeria Posegate; St. Louis; probably served in the Civil War (Union), not confirmed in Army records.

Ezette (daughter; born on the “Izette”, died 1847, New Orleans)

(Naeseth: 36, 304; Tveite, Landvik, II: 120; Tveiten, thesis: 129; parish records, Fjære; passport protocols; *Letters from the Pioneers, nos. 1, 11-13*; *Iglandsætt*: 6; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO; notes from Nora C. Nelson).

***Osuld Kittelsen Iglad** (1814 – 1847); a farmer; resident at Hesnes, Fjære Parish; died in New Orleans, 1847

married to **Torine Berulvsdatter Kiland** (1813 – 1847); died in New Orleans, 1847; the surviving children joined uncle John Beruldsen Kiland and went to Chicago

Karen (daughter) (1836 - ?)

Bergette (Birthe Marie) (daughter) (1838 - ?)

Aasulv (Kittel) (son)

Peder (son), died 1847, New Orleans

(Naeseth: 36, 305; Tveite, Landvik, II: 21, 122; passport protocols; notes from Nora C. Nelson).

John Beruldsen Kiland (Birkedal) (1817 -); a farmer; went to Chicago

(Naeseth: 39, 307; Tveite, Landvik, II: 21; passport protocols).

***Ole Halvorsen Konnestad** (1816? -); a farmer; resident in Fjære Parish; went to Missouri

married to **Karen** (Catherine ?) **Clemmetsdatter** (1819 -)

Karen (daughter)

Alette (daughter) (1847 -); born in Louisiana

Henry (son) (1849 -) born in Missouri

(Naeseth: 39, 305; ref. notes from Tveiten; parish records, Fjære; passport protocols; *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 1*; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO).

***Simon Simonsen Kulaasen** (Kolaasen) (1826 -); a farm-hand; resident in Øyestad Parish; went to Missouri, later Kansas

(Naeseth: 40; correspondence Naeseth - Tveiten; parish records, Øyestad; *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 1*; Census Returns, Buchanan County, MO, 1850; Census Returns, Doniphan County, KS, 1860).

***Lars Nielsen Haabesland** (Vellanes) (Lewis Nelson) (1822 – 1866); a farmer; resident in Birkenes Parish; went to Missouri, later Kansas (1856); died in East Norway/ Moray, KS.

married to Gurine Osulsdatter Enge (1829 – 1907) (Osul Nielsen Enge's daughter); died in East Norway/ Moray, KS.

Amelia Gusta (daughter) (1849 – 1918); died in East Norway/ Moray, KS; married to Guttorm Steanson; 8 children: Oscar, Ida Grace, Silas Norman, Amelia Juliet, Anna Leonora, Grant, Olive May, and Norman Grant

Nicolas (son) (1851 – 1912); died in East Norway/ Moray, KS; County Commissioner 1902-1906; married to Toline Running, 4 children

Julia (daughter) (1854 -); died in East Norway/ Moray, KS; married to Edward Erikson, came to Kansas in 1878, a farmer; 4 children

Oscar (son) (1856 – 1946); died in East Norway/ Moray, KS; married to Almira Noble

Mary Jane (daughter) (1858 – 1945); died in East Norway/ Moray, KS; married to William Zimmerman

Louisa Theresa (daughter) (1863 -); died in East Norway/Moray, KS; married to George Burkhalter

Margaret Gurina (daughter) (1865 – 1920); died in East Norway/ Moray, KS; married to Bernt Olaus Running

(Naeseth: 36; correspondence Naeseth-Tveiten; parish records, Birkenes, *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 16*; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO; Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas*; Census Returns, Doniphan County, KS, 1860, 1870).

***Hans C. Christiansen Enge** (1826 -); a shoemaker; resident in Eide Parish

(Naeseth: 40; correspondence Naeseth -Tveiten; parish records, Eide)

***Ole Nielsen Bjelland** (1811 -); a farmer; resident in Herefoss Parish; went to Wisconsin

married to **Berthe Omundsdatter** (1822 – 1847); died in New Orleans

Nils (son), died 1847, New Orleans (6 years old)

Ommund (son) (Edmund Olson); participated in the Civil War (Union); taken prisoner, wounded 1864; settled in Silverton, Oregon; married to Karen Larsdatter Slaatum

Gunvor (daughter), adopted away in New Orleans

(Naeseth: 36; parish records, Herefoss; notes from Nora C. Nelson).

***Halvor Nielsen Bjelland** (1817 -); a farmer; resident in Herefoss Parish; Ole's brother, took care of Ommund; settled in Wisconsin

(Naeseth: 37; parish records, Herefoss)

***Osuld Andersen Løvaasen** (1797 – 1869); a farmer; resident in Herefoss Parish; went to Missouri, later Kansas

married to **Maren Nilsdatter Igland** (1796 – 1880); Osul Nielsen Enge and Anders Nielsen Holte's sister; buried Kinghill Cemetery, Kansas

Anders (son) (1823 – 1886); unmarried; carpenter in St. Joseph, prospecting for gold in California, 1850; came to Kansas in 1860; served in the Civil War (Union), sergeant with the 8th Regiment Kansas Voluntary Infantry, comp. G.; secretary for Lutheran congregation; director of school board, East Norway

Nels (son) (1826 – 1907); blacksmith in St. Joseph; came to Kansas in 1860; served in the Civil War (Union), private with the 8th Regiment Kansas Voluntary Infantry, comp. G.; wounded at Chicamauga; ran farm with his brother Anders; died in Kansas

Gunder (son) (1828 – 1906); unmarried; probably served in Civil War (Union), not confirmed by Army records; died in Kansas

Gunborg (daughter) (1832 – 1894); married to Ole (Olsen) Mathias Dannevig (1822 – 1894); widower after Sara Nielsen Kalvehaven, Peder Nielsen Kalvehaven's daughter

Osul (son) (1837 – 1905); married to Charity Spencer, 3 children; came to Kansas in 1860; treasurer of school district; had a vineyard, and grew peaches and apples; buried in Doniphan County, Kansas

Peder (son) (1841 - ?); settled in Idaho (first Kansas and then Michigan); served in the Civil war (Union), private with the 10th Regiment Kansas Voluntary Infantry

(Tveite, II: 120; Naeseth: 37; parish records, Herefoss; *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 1*; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO; notes from Nora C. Nelson; Cutler, *History of the State of Kansas*; Census Returns, Doniphan County, 1860, 1870).

***Gunhild Torjusdatter Rosaasen** (1830 -); went to Wisconsin

later married Gunnar Halvorsen Kiland (who also emigrated in 1846)

(Naeseth: 165; Tveite, II: 104; passport protocols; Kiland, *archives*; Bjerke: 65).

Others:

Gunder Terkildsen Skiftenes
 married to Margrethe Nielsdatter Skiftenes
 (passport protocols; Tveiten: 136; *Iglandsætt*).

Olve (?) Clemmetsen
 married to Maren Henriksdatter
 Clemmet
 Anne Helene
 Salve
 (passport protocols; Tveiten: 136; *Iglandsætt*).

Thorkild Ånonsen Rislå
 (Tveiten: 136; *Iglandsætt*).

1847

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere

1848

Michael Michaelsen Landvigeie (1800 -)
 married to Jacobine Davidsdatter (1816 -)
 David (son) (1845 -)
 Regine Marie (daughter) (1848 -)
 (Naeseth: 213; correspondence Naeseth - Tveiten; parish records , Landvik; passport protocols).
 Anders Aanonsen Birkaas (1796 – 1862); went to Wisconsin
 married to Targjer Ellefdatter Birkaas (1797 – 1873)
 Aase (daughter)
 Ellef (son)
 Anne Gurine (daughter)
 (Naeseth: 218; Tveite, Landvik, I: 334 - 335; parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).
 Targjer Kristine Andersdatter Birkaas (1829 -); went to Wisconsin
 married to Gunder Madsen Bøe from Gjerpen, Telemark; emigrated 1843
 (Naeseth: 218; Tveite, Landvik, I: 334 - 335; parish records, Landvik).
 Tobias Andersen Birkaas (1831 -); went to Wisconsin
 (Naeseth: 218; Tveite, Landvik, I: 334 - 335; parish records, Landvik).
 Thor Andreas Andersen Birkaas (1833 -); went to Wisconsin
 (Naeseth: 218; Tveite, Landvik, I: 334 - 335; parish records, Landvik).
 Thorjus Andreassen (Thorsen) Grinvolden (1824 -); went to Wisconsin
 (Naeseth: 218; Tveite, Landvik, II: 61; passport protocols).
 Ole Andreassen Gusdal (1827 - 1891); went to Wisconsin
 (Naeseth: 218; correspondence Naeseth - Tveiten; parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).
 Ole Olsen Gusdal (1828? -)
 (Naeseth: 219; correspondence Naeseth - Tveiten; passport protocols).
 Ragnild Baarsdatter Grindalen (1801 -)
 (Naeseth: 218; correspondence Naeseth - Tveiten; parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).
 *Aasulv Torjussøn Rosaasen (O. Torrison) (1828 – 1892); resident in Herefoss Parish; settled in Manitowoc,
 Minnesota ; married to Martha Findal; 10 children, among those Isaac Torrison (pastor) and Oskar M. Torrison
 (judge)
 (Stalleland: 2; *Iglandsætt*)).
 Lars Olsen Røed (1808? -)
 (Naeseth: 219; correspondence Naeseth - Tveiten; passport protocols).
 Maren Elise Christiansdatter More (1817 -)
 (Naeseth: 219; correspondence Naeseth - Tveiten; parish records, Landvik).

1849

Birthe Halvorsdatter Kiland (1822 – 1906); went to Wisconsin, later Minnesota

- married to Salve Tallaksen Igland, emigrated 1844
 Anne Halvorsdatter Kiland (1824 – 1900); went to Wisconsin, later Minnesota
 married to Mads Knutsen Åmli
 (both: Naeseth: 219; Tveiten, thesis: 133; Tveite, Landvik, II: 104; passport protocols; Kiland, *archives; Iglandsætten*).
- Kittel Osuldsen Igland (1788 – 1849); went to Missouri
 married to Karen Pedersdatter Gjennestad (died 1845)
 Johannes (Johan) (son)
 Osuld (son)
- (Tveite, II: 122; Tveiten, thesis: 130; parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).
 *Torjus Pedersen Hesnes (Birkedal) (1798 -); resident at Hesnes, Fjære Parish; went to Missouri
 married to Birthe Kitteldatter Igland Hesnes; born 1816
 Peder (son)
 Anne (daughter)
 Karen Johanne (daughter)
 Kittel Christian (son)
 Petrine Marie (daughter)
- (Tveite, II: 19, 122; Tveiten, thesis: 130).
 *Clemmet Tørrisen Langsæhovet; resident in Arendal; went to Missouri
 married to Anne Larsdatter Langsæhovet
 Birthe Marie (daughter)
 Tønnes (son)
 Anne Christine (daughter)
 Gunhild (daughter)
- (Tveiten, thesis: 131)
 Ole Clemmetsen Solberg (1803 – 1880); arrived on the *Nordpolen*, New York; went to Missouri, later Kansas;
 buried at Moray, KS; his first wife was Ingeborg Eriksdatter (dead in Norway) (3 children)
 married second time to Åsle (Osle) Larsdatter Solberg (1820 – 1894); buried at Moray, Kansas
 Tønnes (son) (1833 – 1890); married to Eliza Gunderson
 Thomine (daughter) (1825 – 1913); married to Gunder Thronson
 Clemmet (son) (1839 – 1901); married to Maria Lyons; served in the Civil War (Union),
 private with the 10th Regiment Kansas Voluntary Infantry, comp. F.
 Lars (Lewis) (son) married to Debilla Wilmette
 Mathias (son); married to Tobina Larsen Dolholt
 Inger Gurine (daughter)
 Søren (son) (1848 – 1867); buried at Kinghill Cemetery, Kansas
 James (son) (1850 – 1861)
 Mary (daughter) (1852 – 1917); married to Chris Barenthson
 Anne Marie (daughter) (1854 – 1927); married to Johannes Hoverson, Kansas
 Ingeborg (-)
 Nels (son) (1856 – 1861)
 Thomas (son) (1860 – 1861)
 Nellie (daughter) (1861 – 1941); married to Simon Anderson
 Joanna (daughter) (1866 – 1885); married to John Hargis, Missouri
- (Tveite, II: 40; Tveiten, thesis: 131; *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 7*; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO; Census Returns, Doniphan County, KS, 1870; notes from Nora C. Nelson).
 Lars Tallaksen Igland Birkedal (1808 -); went to Wisconsin
 (Tveite, II: 24; Tveiten, thesis: 133; parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).
 Gunhild O. Salvesdatter Igland; went to Wisconsin (parents emigrated in 1844)
 (Tveiten, thesis: 133; parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).
 Engel Stenersen Skiftenes (1817 – 1865?); went to Missouri
 married to Maren Øvensdatter Skiftenes (1823 -); married second time to Terje Enge
 (Tveite, II: 205; Tveiten, thesis: 135; parish records, Landvik; passport protocols)
 Even Gjeruldsen Gauslaa Hørte (1821 – 1863?); went to Wisconsin; killed in the Civil War
 (Tveite, II: 54; Tveiten, thesis: 136; parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).
 Christen Knudsen Bjorhuslia (Bjørkaaslien) (1805 -)
 married to Todne Arnesdatter Skiftenes (1805 -)
 Oline Tomine (daughter)
 Peder (son)
 Anne Johanne (daughter)

Maren Marte (daughter; followed in 1850)
 Karen Kistine (daughter; followed in 1850)
 (Tveite, II: 202, 204; passport protocols).
 Endre Terkildsen Østerhus (1792 -); went to Missouri
 married to Maren Øvensdatter (1794 -)
 Øven (son)
 Elen Marie (daughter)
 Christen (son)
 (parish records, Landvik; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO).
 Thor Ellefsen Landvig (1803 -)
 married to Anne Terjesdatter (1808 -)
 Ellef (son) (1831 -)
 Terje (son) (1833 -)
 Anne Margrethe (daughter) (1836 -)
 Marte Gurine (daughter) (1839 -)
 Birgitte Sofie (daughter) (1841 -)
 Gusta Lovise (daughter) (1844 -)
 Anne Marie (daughter) (1846 -)
 (parish records, Landvik).
 Mathias Olsen Skiftenæs (1829 -)
 (parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).
 Ingeborg Cathrine Knudsdatter (Klømren?) (1828 -)
 (parish records, Landvik).
 Gunhild Terjesdatter Rosaasen (1830 -)
 (parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).
 Johannes Larsen Døkkedal (1824 -)
 (parish records, Landvik).
 Peder Torjussen (1835 -)
 (parish records, Landvik).
 Anne Torjusdatter (1836 -)
 (parish records, Landvik).
 Oline Marie Aslaksdatter Hafstad (1832 -)
 (parish records, Landvik).
 Even Johnsen Birkedal (1827 -)
 (passport protocols).
 Nils Larsen (1815 -); went to Doniphan County, Kansas
 married to Anne Oline Knudsdatter (1820 – 1865); buried at Kinghill Cemetery, Kansas
 married second time to Martha –
 (Notes from Nora C. Nelson; burial records, Doniphan County, KS, Troy library, KS).

1850

*Ole Mathias Dannevig (1822 – 1894); resident in Eide Parish; went to Missouri
 married to Sara Nielsen Pedersdatter Dannevig; Peder Nilsen Kalvehaven's daughter
 Mathias Henrik (son) (1847 – 1930)
 (Tveiten, thesis: 135; *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 7*; passport protocols; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO; Census Returns, Doniphan County, KS, 1870).
 *Ole Nielsen Iglan Lia (Lien) (1797 (1805?) -); farmer in Fjære Parish; arrived on the *Nordpolen* in New York, Sept. 20, 1850 (Osul Enge and Anders Holte's brother); went to Missouri, then Kansas, then Missouri
 married to Anne Hansdatter Lia (1807 – 1850); widow after Peder Grøslø; died in St. Joseph
 Kirsten (step-daughter) (Kjersti) (1834 – 1916); settled in Nebraska; married to W. Rose
 Åse Helene (daughter) (1843 -); married to Lee Pollard; settled in Nebraska
 Peder (son) (1840 - 1858); lived in Kansas
 Niels (son) (1846 – 1857)
 Gro Gerbjørgsdatter (accompanied them)
 (Tveiten, thesis: 129; parish records, Fjære; *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 2*; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO; Census Returns, 1860, Doniphan County, KS; *Iglandsætten*).
 *Ole Nielsen Rørmoen (1797 - 1861); resident in Eide Parish; Peder Kalvehaven's brother; arrived on the *Hermes*, New York, 1850; went to Missouri, later Kansas

married to Anne Olsdatter Rørmoen (1819 – 1850); died in 1850, shortly after arrival in Missouri
 Åsille Andrea (daughter) (1838 – 1873); married to Johannes Hoverson, Lars Håversen
 Stensvand's son
 Niels (son) (- 1870); died in Kansas
 Maren (daughter) (1842 – 1909); married to Edward Pelton; died in Kansas
 Olava (daughter) (1846 -)
 Ole Edward (son) (1848 -)
 Gusta (daughter) (1850 -)

(Tveiten, thesis: 130; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO; Census Returns, Doniphan County, 1870; *Iglandsætten*).

*Terje Larsen Skredderstøa; resident in Moland Parish; went to Missouri

married to Anne Gundersdatter Skredderstøa

Julienne (daughter)
 Knud (son)
 Anne Thomine (daughter)
 Syvert Christian (son)
 Lars (son)
 Gunder (son)

(Tveiten, thesis: 131).

*Gunder Guttormsen Steine (1810 – 1852); resident in Øyestad Parish; arrived on the *Nordpolen*, New York; went to Missouri, then to Kansas, then back to Buchanan County, Missouri; buried in Oakhill Cemetery, St. Joseph

married to Jacobia Reichelt Steine (1808 - 1899); buried in Feuquay Cemetery, St. Joseph
 Birthe Marie (daughter) (1833 -); married to Lars Nelson Øye; buried in Oklahoma
 Maren (daughter) (1837 – 1860); married to Ole Hansen ;died in Kansas
 Mathilde (daughter) (1845 -)
 Gunhild (daughter)
 Thomas Guttorm (son) (1835 – 1869); probably served in the Civil War, not confirmed in
 Army records; married to Torbjørg Bergette Hansen
 Michael Reichelt (son) (1841 -)
 Johan Paulus (son) (1849 - 1864); died in the Civil War
 Niels (son) (1842 -); probably served in the Civil War (Union), not confirmed in Army
 records.

Jacob Gunnerius (son) (1847 - 1920); married to Helle Andrea Hansen; buried in St. Joseph
 (Tveiten, thesis: 132; *Letters from the Pioneers, no. 2*; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO; church records, Troy, KS, 1869; *Iglandsætten*).

*Peder Guttormsen Gjennestad (1802 – 1878); resident in Øyestad Parish; arrived on the *Nordpolen*, New York; went to Missouri; buried in Kinghill Cemetery, Kansas

married to Karen Bentsdatter Gjennestad (1801 – 1869); died in Kansas
 Guttorm (son) (1834 -); married to Berte Evans; buried in Kinghill Cemetery
 Bent (son) (1836 – 1863); unmarried; died in Kansas
 Karen (Catherine) (daughter) (1839 -); died in Kansas after fall from a horse
 Birthe Marie (daughter) (1831- 1913); married to Isaac Spencer
 Gunhild (daughter) (1846 – 1922); married to Joseph Spencer
 Gunnerius (son) (1850 – 1943); born on board the ship in the Atlantic Ocean; married to J.A.
 Baker

(Tveiten, thesis: 132; *Iglandsætten*).

*Nicolai Guttormsen Thompson Steine (1822 – 1850); resident in Øyestad Parish; arrived on the *Nordpolen*, New York ; buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph

married to Maren Hansdatter Ørteland Steine (1818 - 1865); later married Hover Hoverson; buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph

Guttorm (son)
 Hans (son) (1847 - 1866); buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph
 Peder Igland (son)
 Nancy Christine (daughter) (1852 – 1940); married to John Mann; settled in Nebraska
 Louise Caroline (daughter) (1855 – 1935); married to William Dannevik; settled in Troy,
 Kansas

America Adeline (daughter) (1858 – 1940); married to James Priest; died in Washington D.C.

(Tveiten, thesis: 132; *Letters from the Pioneers, no.10, 13*; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO; *Iglandsætten*; notes from Nora C. Nelson).

*Berthe Gundersdatter Gjennestad (ca. 1800 – ca. 1866) (mother of the four brothers Guttormsen/ Steine/ Gjennestad); resident in Øyestad Parish; arrived on the *Nordpolen*, New York; went to Missouri, later Kansas (Tveiten, [thesis](#): 132; *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 2; notes from Nora C. Nelson).

*Niels Guttormsen Igland Thompson (Tingstveitkjerret) (1821 - 1876); resident in Øyestad Parish; arrived on the *Nordpolen*, New York; went to Missouri, later Kansas; buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph

married to Ingeborg Hansdatter Ørteland Tingstveitkjerret (1821 – 1904)

Åse (daughter) (1850 – 1890); married to “George Nelson”, Peder Nilsen Kalvehaven’s son

Thomas N. (son) (1852 – 1937); unmarried; died in Oklahoma

Hans (son) (1855 – 1861); buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph

Elisebeth (daughter) (1857 - 1926); buried in the Nelson cemetery, St. Joseph

Adeline Marie (daughter) (1860 - 1938); buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph

Hannah (daughter) (1863 - 1947); buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph

(Tveiten, [thesis](#): 132; *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 13; Stalleland: 7; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO; notes from Nora C. Nelson).

*Ole Stiansen Gåskjenn (1799 – 1866); resident in Holt Parish; arrived on the *Hermes*, New York; went to Missouri, later Kansas (1858); died in East Norway/ Moray, KS

married to Ingeborg Olsdatter Gåskjenn (1798 – 1870); died in East Norway/ Moray, KS

Stian (son) (1836 – 1857); buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph

Ole (son) (1830 – 1916); married to Olava (Laura) Nelson, Peder Kalvehaven’s daughter;

buried in the Nelson Cemetery, St. Joseph; 7 children

Anne Marie (daughter) (1825 – 1896); married to Ole Eriksen (1824 – 1895); buried in Moray, KS, 8 children

Thomas (Guttorm) (1833 – 1901); died in East Norway/ Moray, KS.; married to Amalie Gurine

Nelson (1849 – 1918), Lewis Nelson’s daughter; died in East Norway/ Moray, KS. They had 8 children: 7 settled in Kansas, 1 in Idaho

(Tveiten, [thesis](#): 135; *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 8; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO; Census Returns, Doniphan County, 1870).

*Gunborg Torjusdatter Reiersølmoen; resident in Øyestad Parish; went to Missouri

Ånon (son)

Knud (son)

Susanne (daughter)

(Tveiten, [thesis](#): 135)

*Sigrid Olsdatter Svenes; resident in Åmli Parish; went to Missouri

(Tveiten, [thesis](#): 135)

Anne Iversdatter Lunden (1820 -); went to Missouri; married to Anders Nielsen Holthe (his second marriage)

(parish records, Landvik; passport protocols; *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 2; Census Returns, 1850, Buchanan County, MO).

Maren Mathea Knudsdatter Bjorhuslien (1831 -)

(parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).

Karen Kristine Knudsdatter Bjorhuslien (1828 -)

(parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).

Birthe Sørine Gundersdatter Gusdal (1826 -)

(parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).

Torsten Hansen Gurebo (1808 -); (widower); arrived on the *Nordpolen*, New York; went to Missouri

Thorborg (daughter)

Anthon Severin (son)

(passport protocols).

Syvert Svendsen Haaland (1829 -)

(passport protocols).

Johannes Larsen (1808 -)

(passport protocols).

Ole Johan Johnsen Haaland (1808 -)

(passport protocols).

Ingeborg Torkildsdatter Haaland (1829 -)

(passport protocols).

*Ole Eriksen (1824 – 1895); resident in Holt Parish; arrived on the *Hermes*, New York, 1850, settled in Kansas married to Anna Marie Stiansen (1825 – 1896); both buried at Moray, KS.

Marthea Elene (daughter) (1851 – 1895); married to - Fischer

Edward (son) (1854 – 1881); married Julia Nelson (1854 – 1926), 4 children

Julia Ann (daughter) (1838 – 1875)

Ole Severin (son) (1859 – 1904); married Gusta Thompson
 Caroline Rebecca (daughter) (1862 – 1904); married Chester Tellefson
 Andrew Osborne (son) (1866 – 1891)
 (Census Returns, Doniphan County, 1870).

1851

Aslak Halvorsen Kiland (1833 – 1895); went to Wisconsin (uncertainty about the year of emigration)
 (Kiland, *archives*).
 Johan Ellefsen Landsverk (1814 -)
 (passport protocols).

1852

Christen Osuldsen (1827 -)
 (parish records, Landvik).

1853

Knud Terjesen Stalleland (1817 -); went to Minnesota;
 married to Marthe Olsdatter Metveit Stalleland
 Terje (son)
 Ole (son)
 (Tveite, II: 101; Tveiten, thesis: 134; parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).
 *Guttorm Jensen Espestøl; resident in Åmli Parish; went to Missouri
 married to Maren Pedersdatter Espestøl
 (Tveiten, thesis: 135).
 Aanon Andersen Toskedal (Birkaas) (1824 -)
 (Tveite, II: 93; passport protocols).
 Gunvor Terkelsdatter Haaland (1832 -)
 (parish records, Landvik).
 Gunhild Nilsdatter Toskedal (1821 -)
 (parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).
 Anders Larsen Skiftenæs (1814 -);
 married to Berte Olsdatter Skiftenæs (1828 -)
 (parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).
 Berthe Margrethe Olufsdatter Stien (1825 -)
 (parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).
 Gunder Christian Andersen Gusdal (1834 -)
 (parish records, Landvik; passport protocols) .

1854

*Knud Nielsen Håbesland; went to Missouri; resident in Birkenes Parish;
 married to Helene Olsdatter Håbesland
 Mathias (son)
 Syvert Christian (son)
 Gunille (daughter)
 Karen Helene (daughter)
 (Tveiten, thesis: 134).
 Osuld Terjesen Håland (1795 -); went to Minnesota;
 married to Åse Rasmusdatter
 Terje (son)
 Rasmus (son)
 Gurine (daughter)
 Ånon (son) (killed in the Civil War)
 Thomas (son) (killed in the Civil War)
 Kristian (son)
 (Tveite, II: 124; Tveiten, thesis: 134; parish records, Landvik; passport protocols; *Iglandsætten*).
 *Ole Geruldsen Nævisdal; went to Missouri; resident in Øyestad Parish
 (Tveiten, thesis: 135; *Iglandsætten*).
 *Knud Gjeruldsen Nævisdal; resident in Øyestad Parish; went to Missouri

(Tveiten, thesis: 135; *Iglandsætten*).

*Gjeruld Kittelsen Nævisdal; resident in Øyestad Parish; went to Missouri

(Tveiten, thesis: 135; *Iglandsætten*).

*Johannes Kittelsen Nævisdal; resident in Øyestad Parish; went to Missouri

(Tveiten, thesis: 135; *Iglandsætten*).

Helga Nottosdatter Gjørbrønden (1829 -)

(parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).

Torborg Nilsdatter Gjørbrønden (1808 -)

(parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).

Nils Olsen Kiland (1832 -)

(passport protocols).

Gunder Gundersen Birkedal (1834 -)

(parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).

Christen Olsen Bakken (1831 -)

(parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).

Osuld Halvorsen Klomren (1829 -); also listed in 1862 (then married)

(parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).

By 1854, the following unidentified Norwegians had arrived in St. Joseph, Buchanan County, Missouri. The spelling of their names makes an identification very difficult, and the names here printed are “normalized”, but close to being guesses. They may possibly be the Osul Nelson family.

Ober (?) (Osul?, Ole?) Nelson (52), farmer

Anne (35)

Nels (?) (13)

Mathilde (?) (12)

Maren (?) (10)

Gusta (?) (6)

Ole (?) (4)

Ellen (?) (2)

Nels (?) Johnsen (48), farmer

Caroline (?) (28)

John (?) (4)

Celia (?) (18)

1855

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere

1856

Gunder Guttormsen Birkedal Ronnen (1808 -); went to Missouri;

married to Anne Torjusdatter Birkedal (1806 -)

Gunder (son)

(Tveite, II: 105, 187; Tveiten, thesis: 134; parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).

1857

Carl August Prydtz (1825 -)

married to Anne Marie Thomasdatter Prydtz (1831 -)

(parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).

1858

Anders Aanonsen Birkedal (1823 -)

(parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).

1859

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere

1860

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere
(compulsory passport registration was revoked in 1860)

1861

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere

1862

Osuld Halvorsen Klomra (1828 -)
 married to Anne Torjusdatter (1832 -)
 Aasine (daughter)
 (parish records, Landvik; passport protocols).

1863

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere

1864

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere

1865

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere

1866

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere

1867

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere

1868

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere

1869

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere

1870

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere

1871

Anne Cecilie Morholt (1846 -)
 (Tveite, II: 39).
 Olav Eskedal
 (Stalleland: 5; *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 5 (Ole or Olav?)).
 Mathias Ronnen
 (Stalleland:5; *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 5).
 Aanon Kylland
 (Stalleland: 5; *Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 5).
 Anne Pedersdatter
 (Stalleland: 5)
 Gjerul Gjømle
 (*Letters from the Pioneers*, no. 5).

1872

No registration in parish records, passport protocols, or elsewhere

1873

Johannes (John) Larsen Dolholt (1814 -); buried at Moray, Kansas
married to Karen Toline Bentsdatter; born 1816

Lauritz Teodor (son)

Maren Katrine (daughter)

Jochumine (daughter)

Torvald Gunerius (son); died 1895 in a Veterans' Hospital, Topeka, Kansas

Johanne Tobine (daughter)

(Tveite, II: 40; notes from Nora C. Nelson; Census Returns, Kansas, 1880).

1874

When recorded in the *Emigration lists*, information is given in the following order:

Name; age/ born; residence; occupation (including wife/ children); emigrated (date); destination; shipping line; married/ unmarried (m./ um.).

Source for the period 1875-1900: manuscripts of *Emigration lists, I-VI*, Statsarkivet, Kristiansand/ *State Archives*. Recorded by police authorities before embarkation.

No registration

1875

Nikolaysen, Kristian; 1858; Landvik; farmer; 14/5 – 75; St. Joseph, Missouri; - ; um.

1876

Aanensen, Johannes; 1858; Landvik; servant boy; 21/4 – 76; - ; - ; um.

Gjerlufsen, Knud; 1834; Landvik; farmer; 11/5 – 76; Springfield, Illinois; - ; um.

Torkildsen, Andreas; 1833; Landvik; seaman; 21/4 – 76; - ; - ; - .

1877

No registration

1878

No registration

1879

Jonassen, Villas Vig; 1855; Landvik; seaman; 21/4 – 79; - ; - ; m.

Jonassen, Olene; - ; Grimstad; wife; 21/4 – 79; - ; - ; m.

Jonassen, - ; - ; child; 21/4 – 79; - ; - ; um.

Osuldsen, Terje; 1855; Landvik; farmer; 13/6 – 79; - ; - ; um.

1880

No registration

1881

Grøslø, Helene Osuldsdatter; 1862; Landvik; - ; - ; - ; - ; um.

(Kiland, *archives*)

Kiland, Anton Aresen; - ; Landvik; - ; - ; - ; - ; um.

(Kiland, *archives*)

Ommundsen, Ole A.; 1837; Landvik; ship's master; 22/7 – 81; - ; - ; m.

1882

Johnsen, Gjerulds; 25; Landvik; farmer; 4/2 – 82; - ; - ; um.
 Johnsen, John; 18; Landvik; worker; 4/2 – 82; - ; - ; um.

1883

Andersen, Johannes; 24; Landvik; worker; 12/4 – 83; - ; National; m.
 Johansen, Berthe; 58; Landvik; wife; 12/4 – 83; - ; National; m.
 Kiland, Terje Osuldsen; 20; Landvik; farmer; - ; - ; - ; um.
 (Kiland, *archives*)
 Larsen, Joran; 26; Landvik; wife; 12/4 – 83; - ; National; m.
 Larsen, Henriette L.; 4; Landvik; daughter; 12/4 – 83; - ; National; um.
 Larsen, Lars; 6/12; Landvik; son; 12/4 – 83; - ; National; um.
 Hansen, Vilhelm;-;Landvik; - ; - ; - ; um.
 (Anna Iglan Bendixen, *private collection*)
 Iglan, Terje Nilsen; 18; Landvik; 17/11-83; - ; Thingvalla; um.
 (returned home with tuberculosis in 1885)
 (Anna Iglan Bendixen, *private collection*)

1884

No registration

1885

Kristensen, Nicolai; 60; Landvik; farmer; 15/10 – 85; Wisconsin; Thingvalla; m.
 Kristensen, Kirsten; 60; Landvik; wife; 15/10 - 85; Wisconsin; Thingvalla; m.

1886

Gundersen, Ragnhild; 41; Landvik; maid servant; 19/8 – 86; Wisconsin; Thingvalla; um.
 Nilsen, Nicolai; 23; Landvik; seaman; 5/3 – 86; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Olsen, Kristen; 26; Landvik; seaman; 5/3 – 86; New York; Thingvalla; um.

1887

Aanensen, Thor; 44; Landvik; farmer; 17/3 – 87; New York; State; m.
 Amundsen, August; 36; Landvik; ship's master; 23/12 – 87; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Arm, Isak M.; 20; Landvik; worker; 15/4 – 87; Minnesota; Thingvalla; um.
 Gundersen, Anton; 29; Landvik; seaman; 12/8 – 87; New York; Guion; um.
 Halvorsen, Aanen Metveit (Kiland); 18; Landvik; worker; 1/4 - 87; Kansas; Cunard; um.
 Kristensen, Alf; 39; Landvik; carpenter; 18/3 – 87; New York; White Star; m.
 Larsen, Aslak; 25; Landvik; worker; 24/3 – 87; Kansas; Cunard; um.
 Larsen, Gunder; 25; Landvik; worker; 24/3 – 87; Kansas; Cunard; um.
 Olsen, Torjus; 20; Landvik; worker; 1/4 – 87; Kansas; Cunard; um.
 Olsen, Øven; 35; Landvik; farmer; 10/6 – 87; Kansas; Cunard; um.
 Tellefsen, Mads; 38; Landvik; seaman; 18/11 – 87; New York; State; um.
 Tellefsen, Peder; 36; Landvik; mate; 17/3 – 87; New York; State; m.
 Tellefsen, Petter P.; 28; Landvik; worker; 24/3 – 87; Kansas; Cunard; um.

1888

Aanensen, Nils; 1865; Landvik; worker; 6/4 – 88; New York; National; um.
 Aanensen, Thor; 1841; Landvik; carpenter; 15/5 – 88; New York; Holland; m.
 Andersen, Aanen Lunden; 1842; Landvik; farmer; 13/4 – 88; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Andreassen, Jens; 1870; Landvik; worker; 1/6 – 88; Wisconsin; Cunard; um.
 Eliassen, Terje; 1857; Landvik; worker; 6/4 – 88; New York; National; m.
 Eriksen, Ole Chr.; 1848; Landvik; mate; 6/4 – 88; New York; National; m.
 Evensen, Aanen; 1866; Landvik; carpenter; 13/4 – 88; New York; White Star; um.
 Gunnufsen, Nils E.; 1856; Landvik; worker; 9/10 – 88; New York; National; um.

Haaland, Abraham M.; 1866; Landvik; worker; 13/4 – 88; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Jensen, Marie S.; 1868; Landvik; maid servant; 20/4 – 88; New York; Guion; um.
 Johannesen, Gustav; 1856; Landvik; worker; 17/3 – 88; Michigan; Thingvalla; um.
 Kittelsen, Gregorius; 1866; Landvik; worker; 13/4 – 88; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Kittelsen, Kittel; 1861; Landvik; worker; 13/4 – 88; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Kristensen, Gustav; 1862; Landvik; worker; 31/3 – 88; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Landvig, Daniel; 1843; Landvik; seaman; 13/4 – 88; New York; Thingvalla; m./ widower
 Larsen, Carl; 1868; Landvik; worker; 13/4 – 88; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Mathiassen, Petter J.; 1857; Landvik; seaman; 20/4 – 88; Boston; Cunard; um.
 Olsen, Nils; 1841; Landvik; carpenter; 6/4 – 88; New York; National; m.
 Rasmussen, Anton; 1841; Landvik; farmer; 13/4 – 88; New York; White Star; m.
 Salvesen, Nils; 1851; Landvik; carpenter; 6/4 – 88; New York; National; m./ widower
 Sørensen, Søren; 1867; Landvik; seaman; 22/3 – 88; New York; White Star; um.
 Terjesen, Tobias; 1867; Landvik; seaman; 31/3 – 88; New York; Thingvalla; um.

1889

Aanensen, Terje A.; 1867; Landvik; worker; 12/4 – 89; Missouri; Cunard; um.
 Gundersen, Anton; 1846; Landvik; mate; 4/5 – 89; New York; Holland; m.
 Hansen, Martha; 1860; Landvik; - ; 2/8 – 89; Wisconsin; Thingvalla; um.
 Olsen, Gunhild; 1854; Landvik; maid servant; 1/3 – 89; New York; White Star; um.
 Tresnæs, Othilie; 1859; Landvik; wife; 19/4 – 89; Chicago; Thingvalla; m.

1890

Gundersen, Nils A.; 36; Landvik; seaman; 12/4 – 90; New York; Holland; m.
 Hunland, Terje Terjesen; 49; Landvik; farmer; 20/2 – 90; Minnesota; Inman; um.
 Johannesen, Helene; 30; Landvik; wife; 18/7 – 90; Dakota; Thingvalla; m.
 Johannsen, Gunhild; 7; Landvik; daughter; 18/7 – 90; Dakota; Thingvalla; um.
 Johannesen, Elias; 4; Landvik; son; 18/7 – 90; Dakota; Thingvalla; um.
 Johannesen, Johannes; 2; Landvik; son; 18/7 – 90; Dakota; Thingvalla; um.
 Johnsen, Tellef; 24; Landvik; worker; 25/4 – 90; New York; Thingvalla; um.

1891

Jensen, Øven Skiftenes; 1864; Landvik; seaman; 3/4 – 91; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Johannesen, Johan; 1853; Landvik; carpenter; 10/9 – 91; New York; Inman; m.
 Knudsen, Gunder; 1840; Landvik; mate; 6/3 – 91; Chicago; Thingvalla; m.
 Kristiansen, Anton; 1867; Landvik; carpenter; 3/4 – 91; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Osuldsen, Aanen Kiland; 1866; Landvik; farmer; 17/4 – 91; Minnesota; Thingvalla; um.
 Osuldsen, Gunder; 1872; Landvik; worker; 28/3 – 91; Chicago; Thingvalla; um.
 Osuldsen, Terje Kiland; 1863; Landvik; farmer; 17/4 – 91; Minnesota; Thingvalla; um.
 Tellefsen, Kristen; 1869; Landvik; farmer; 17/4 – 91; Minnesota; Thingvalla; um.

Risdal, Gunnar; settled in Michigan; farmer
 (Stalleland: 28)

1892

Andersen, Nils; 1841; Landvik; carpenter; 1/9 – 92; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Børresen, David; 1848; Landvik; ship's master; 1/4 – 92; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Christensen, Alf; 1847; Landvik; farmer; 6/5 – 92; New York; Guion; m.
 Dalholt; Ole; 1858; Landvik; farmer; 8/1 – 92; Wisconsin; Cunard; um.
 Jensen, Terje; 1865; Landvik; seaman; 25/3 – 92; New York; Inman; um.
 Pedersen, Olaus; 1847; Landvik; seaman; 10/6 – 92; New York; Hamburg Packet; m.
 Pettersen, Martinus; 1854; Landvik; ship's master; 13/4 – 92; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Salvesen, Salve A.; 1850; Landvik; seaman; 10/6 – 92; New York; Hamburg Packet; m.
 Tellefsen, Gunda; 1872; Landvik; seamstress; 26/5 – 92; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Thorsen, Aanen; 1871; Landvik; farmer; 8/7 – 92; Wisconsin; Cunard; um.

1893

Antonsen, Andreas; 1856; Landvik; farmer; 1/7 – 93; Wisconsin; Scandia; m.
 Jacobsen, Kristian; 1861; Landvik; carpenter; 5/5 – 93; New York; Scandia; m.
 Jacobsen, Gunhild; 1857; Landvik; wife; 5/5 – 93; New York; Scandia; m.
 Jacobsen, Anna; 1891; Landvik; daughter; 5/5 – 93; New York; Scandia; um.
 Jacobsen, Lars; 1886; Landvik; son; 5/5 – 93; New York; Scandia; um.
 Nilsen, Andreas; 1877; Landvik; worker; 12/8 – 93; New York; Scandia; um.
 Nilsen, Gustav; 1864; Landvik; mate; 14/4 – 93; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Olsen, Mads Molland (?); 1848; Landvik; mate; 5/5 – 93; New York; Hamburg Packet; m.
 Olsen, Nils Molland (?); 1868; Landvik; worker; 15/7 – 93; New York; Hamburg Packet; um.
 Salvesen, Nils Jørgen; 1851; Landvik; carpenter; 5/5 – 93; New York; Scandia; um.
 Thomsen, Aasine; 1868; Landvik; wife; 23/9 – 93; New York; Scandia; m.
 Thomsen, Gunda; 1890; Landvik; daughter; 23/9 – 93; New York; Scandia; um.

1894

Haugland, Knud; 1841; Landvik; carpenter; 6/4 – 94; New York; Scandia; m.
 Gundersen, Anton S.; 1858; Landvik; mate; 24/5 – 94; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Jacobsen, Knud M.; 1849; Landvik; worker; 29/3 – 94; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Jacobsen, Anna; 1856; Landvik; wife; 29/3 – 94; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Jensen, Jens M.; 1851; Landvik; worker; 29/3 – 94; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Johnsen, Kittel; 1849; Landvik; carpenter; 5/7 – 94; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Nilsen, Antonine; 1864; Landvik; wife; 24/5 – 94; New York; Scandia; m.
 Nilsen, Christian; 1859; Landvik; seaman; 2/3 – 94; New York; White Star; um.
 Olsen, Ole Chr.; 1864; Landvik; seaman; 2/3 – 94; New York; White Star; m.

Risdal, Peder; settled in Michigan; farmer
 (Stalleland: 28)

1895

Aanensen, Adlida; 1868; Landvik; maid servant; 2/5 – 95; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Andersen, Bendik; 1873; Landvik; farmer; 1/6 – 95; New York; Hamburg Packet; um.
 Haugland, Aslak; 1877; Landvik; seaman; 26/4 – 95; New York; Scandia; um.
 Hermansen, Laurits K.; 1864; Landvik; seaman; 2/5 – 95; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Johnsen, Guri Heimdal; 1837; Landvik; wife; 2/5 – 95; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Johnsen, Anton; 1876; Landvik; son; 2/5 – 95; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Johnsen, Ellen; 1879; Landvik; daughter; 2/5 – 95; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Nilsen, Nils Ludvig; 1865; Landvik; mate; 26/4 – 95; New York; Scandia; um.
 Olsen, Edvard; 1868; Landvik; seaman; 4/4 – 95; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Olsen, Vilhelmine; 1870; Landvik; wife; 4/4 – 95; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Olsen, Jenny; 1892; Landvik; daughter; 4/4 – 95; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Osuldsen, Peder Elias; 1861; Landvik; farmer; 29/3 – 95; Illinois; White Star; um.
 Salvesen, Salve A.; 1850; Landvik; seaman; 11/5 – 95; New York; Scandia; m.
 Tellefsen, Ole T.; 1870; Landvik; seaman; 18/4 – 95; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Terjesen, Elef; 1875; Landvik; farmer; 2/5 – 95; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Terjesen, Terje; 1870; Landvik; farmer; 29/3 – 95; Illinois; White Star; um.

1896

Beisland, Albert G. O.; 1870; Landvik; farmer; 7/5 – 96; New York; American; um.
 Haaaland, Nils Johnsen; 1835; Landvik; farmer; 11/9 – 96; New York; Anchor; m.
 Jensen, Johanne; 1880; Landvik; maid servant; 17/4 – 96; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Johannesen, Theodor; 1858; Landvik; seaman; 27/3 – 96; New York; White Star; m.
 Kiland, Are Osuldsen; 1875; Landvik; farmer; 27/3 – 96; Minnesota; Cunard; um.
 Kiland, Bertinius Olsen; 1871; Landvik; farmer; 27/3 – 96; Minnesota; Cunard; um.
 Larsen, Ole; 1861; Landvik; seaman; 17/4 – 96; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Nilsen, Gustav; 1871; Landvik; seaman; 10/4 – 96; New York; Allan; um.
 Olsen, Johan; 1861; Landvik; seaman; 27/3 – 96; New York; White Star; m.

Olsen, Teresia Gusta; 1855; Landvik; wife; 20/2 – 96; New York; Thingvalla; m.
Veding, Edvard Nilsen; 1864; Landvik; farmer; 16/10 – 96; New York; White Star; um.

1897

Christensen, Anton; 1878; Landvik; farmer; 23/9 – 97; Chicago; Cunard; um.
Halvorsen, Gustav; 1867; Landvik; farmer; 22/4 – 97; New York; Thingvalla; um.
Havstad, Nils M.; 1867; Landvik; farmer; 22/4 – 97; New York; Thingvalla; um.
Johannesen, Theodor; 1858; Landvik; seaman; 26/5 – 97; New York; Thingvalla; m.
Johannesen, Julie; 1871; Landvik; wife; 26/5 – 97; New York; Thingvalla; m.
Johannesen, Ellen; 1893; Landvik; daughter; 26/5 – 97; New York; Thingvalla; um.
Jørgensen, Anton; 1851; Landvik; ship's master; 13/5 – 97; New York; White Star; m.
Jørgensen, Ole Andreas; 1849; Landvik; mate; 13/5 – 97; New York; White Star; m.
Olsen, Anton; 1878; Landvik; farmer; 23/9 – 97; Chicago; Cunard; um.
Osuldsen, Peder Elias; 1861; Landvik; farmer; 23/9 – 97; Chicago; Cunard; um.

1898

Andersen, Guri; 1872; Landvik; maid servant; 5/5 – 98; Chicago; Cunard; um.
Bakke, Emil Eliassen; 1866; Landvik; farmer; 24/7 – 98; Chicago; Thingvalla; um.
Beisland, Ole Chr. A.; 1872; Landvik; farmer; 27/5 – 98; New York; White Star; um.
Christiansen, Marie; 1874; Landvik; maid servant; 5/5 – 98; Chicago; Cunard; um.
Havstad, Nils A; 1867; Landvik; farmer; 11/3 – 98; New York; Thingvalla; um.
Hermansen, H. G.; 1880; Landvik; seaman; 24/3 – 98; New York; Thingvalla; um.
Jacobsen, Johan; 1873; Landvik; seaman; 28/1 – 98; New York; White Star; um.
Jensen, Mathias; 1851; Landvik; seaman; 25/3 – 98; New York; White Star; m.
Jensen, Øven; 1864; Landvik; carpenter; 6/10 – 98; New York; Scandinavian-American; um.
Kiland, Torjus Halvorsen; 1871; Landvik; farmer; 5/5 – 98; Chicago; Cunard; um.
Kiland, Kristen Kristensen; 1881; Landvik; farmer; 5/5 – 98; Chicago; um.
Kiland, Christen Osuldsen; 1877; Landvik; farmer; 5/5 – 98; Chicago; um.
Kristensen, Anne; 1867; Landvik; maid servant; 22/4 – 98; Missouri; Cunard; um.
Larsen, Louise; 1864; Landvik; wife; 11/8 – 98; New York; Thingvalla; m.
Larsen, Lars; 1895; Landvik; son; 11/8 – 98; New York; Thingvalla; um.
Tellefsen, Gunda; 1872; Landvik; maid servant; 14/1 – 98; New York; White Star; um.

1899

Beisland, Mathilde; 1878; Landvik; at home; 31/4 – 99; New York; Cunard; um.
Jacobsen, Kristian V.; 1861; Landvik; carpenter; 23/3 – 99; New York; Thingvalla; m.
Jensen, Anders; 1861; Landvik; seaman; 18/5 – 99; New York; Scandinavian-American; m.
Jensen, Karina; 1878; Landvik; maid servant; 23/3 – 99; New York; Thingvalla; um.
Knudsen, Johan Daniel; 1852; Landvik; seaman; 24/3 – 99; New York; White Star; m.
Kristensen, Alf; 1847; Landvik; farmer; 23/3 – 99; New York; Thingvalla; m.
Madsen, Johan; 1871; Landvik; seaman; 15/6 – 99; New York; Scandinavian-American; m.
Madsen, Anna; 1869; Landvik; wife; 15/6 – 99; New York; Scandinavian-American; m.
Madsen, Anton; 1894; Landvik; son; 15/6 – 99; New York; Scandinavian-American; um.
Madsen, Anie; 1896; Landvik; daughter; 15/6 – 99; New York; Scandinavian-American; um.
Nilsen, Aanen Gusdal; 1879; Landvik; farmer; 21/4 – 99; New York; Cunard; um.
Nilsen, Berthe Gusdal; 1882; Landvik; maid servant; 21/4 – 99; New York; Thingvalla; um.
Olsen, Joachim; 1846; Landvik; ship's master; 27/1 – 99; New York; White Star; m.
Olsen, Johan; 1861; Landvik; seaman; 27/1 – 99; New York; White Star; m./ widower
Olsen, Mads; 1848; Landvik; mate; 27/1 – 99; New York; White Star; m.
Skjellufsen, Samuel; 1871; Landvik; seaman; 2/11 – 99; New York; Thingvalla; m.
Tellefsen, Johannes; 1872; Landvik; seaman; 23/3 – 99; New York; Thingvalla; m.
Tellefsen, Martin; 1874; Landvik; mate; 23/3 – 99; New York; Thingvalla; um.

1900

Andersen, Georg; 1880; Landvik; seaman; 5/10 – 00; New York; White Star; um.
Andersen, Ole; 1872; Landvik; seaman; 5/10 – 00; New York; White Star; um.
Andreasen, Kristine; 1880; Landvik; maid servant; 7/6 – 00; Montana; Cunard; um.

Arensen, Oline; 1878; Landvik; worker (f.); 18/4 – 00; S. Dakota; Thingvalla; um.
 Birkedal, Terje Aanensen; 1868; Landvik; farmer; 28/9 – 00; New York; Cunard; m.
 Dalholt, Anna; 1875; Landvik; at home; 14/6 – 00; Kansas; White Star; um.
 Davidsen, Maren; 1876; Landvik; maid servant; 22/3 – 00; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Davidsen, Tørres; 1885; Landvik; at home; 22/3 – 00; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Gundersen, Marie; 1882; Landvik; maid servant; 9/8 – 00; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Hagen, Sofie; 1884; Landvik; worker (f.); 18/4 – 00; S. Dakota; Thingvalla; um.
 Hundeland, Terje; 1841; Landvik; farmer; 18/4 – 00; Minnesota; Thingvalla; um.
 Kristiansen, Tobias; 1871; Landvik; farmer; 3/8 – 00; Kansas; Cunard; um.
 Markusen, Carsten; 1861; Landvik; ship's master; 18/5 – 00; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Nilsen, Nils Johan; 1850; Landvik; seaman; 31/5 – 00; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Nilsen, Thomas; 1863; Landvik; seaman; 31/5 – 00; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Olsen, Johan; 1861; Landvik; seaman; 6/9 – 00; New York; Thingvalla; m. /widower
 Pedersen, Peder; 1872; Landvik; mate; 20/4 – 00; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Pedersen, Sven O.; 1850; Landvik; seaman; 20/9 – 00; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Torbjørnsen, Fredrik; 1876; Landvik; farmer; 28/9 – 00; New York; Cunard; um.

1901

Source for the period 1901 – 1930 is “Emigrantprotokollene, Kristiansand politidistrikt and Arendal politidistrikt” (from 1903)/ *Emigration lists*; digitalized at “Riksarkivet”/ *National Archives*,

www.riksarkivet.no

Information is given in the following order:

Registration number in the lists; date of emigration; name; sex (m. / f.); married/ unmarried (m./ um.); occupation (also children; husband's or father's occupation); date of birth (year); destination; shipping line.

“Carpenter” is used for “ship's carpenter”.

36894 300801 Andreassen, Anders; m.; m.; carpenter; 1874; New York; American
 36544 110701 Gundersen, Andrea; f.; m./ widow; worker (f.); 1846; S. Dakota; Thingvalla
 36543 110701 Gundersen, Ole Oscar; m.; um.; shoemaker; 1883; S. Dakota; Thingvalla
 57193 210301 Jakobsen, Kristian V.; m.; m.; carpenter; 1861; New York; Thingvalla
 57192 210301 Jensen, Nils; m.; m.; steward; 1877; New York; Thingvalla
 57502 050401 Johnsen, Anton; m. um. businessman; 1868 New York American South.
 76163 140201 Johnsen, Kittel m.; m.; carpenter; 1849; New York; Thingvalla
 36751 230801 Kittelsen M., Knut; m.; m.; worker; 1871; New York; White Star
 36752 230801 Kittelsen M., Olga; f.; m.; husband; worker; 1876; New York; White Star
 36753 230801 Kittelsen M., Peter; m.; um.; son; 1896; New York; White Star
 36754 230801 Kittelsen M., Karl; m.; um.; son; 1900; New York; White Star
 57503 120401 Lunden, Anna; f.; um.; at home; 1873; New York; American South.
 36888 300801 Nilsdatter, Oline; f.; um.; seamstress; 1874; New York; American South.
 36889 300801 Pedersdatter, Alida; f.; um.; maid servant; 1886; New York; American South.

1902

58112 150302 Antonsen, Rasmus; m.; um.; seaman; 1878; Boston; Cunard
 60262 161002 Arnesen, John; m.; um.; farmworker; 1883; Illinois; Thingvalla
 60392 281102 Hellgren, Marie; f.; um.; housekeeper; 1881; Baltimore; Thingvalla
 59560 070802 Herdal, Abraham; m.; um.; carpenter; 1882; South Dakota; Thingvalla
 60232 101002 Gunleifsen, Jens S.; m.; -; worker; 1877; Minnesota; White Star
 60251 161002 Johannesen, Johannes; m.; -; shipmaster; 1877; New York; Thingvalla
 59553 070802 Johansen, Jens; m.; um.; worker; 1883; New York; Thingvalla
 60237 101002 Jørgensen, Gunda; f.; um.; maid servant; 1881; New York; White Star
 59825 290802 Jørgensen, Mina; f.; um.; woman's companion; 1865; New York; White Star
 59305 050602 Kristensen, Tønnes m.; m.; carpenter; 1874 New York Thingvalla
 58626 110402 Kristiansdatter, Helene f.; um.; maid servant; 1885; Chicago; White Star
 59428 110702 Madsen, Anton M.; m.; m.; seaman; 1875; Minnesota; Allan
 59429 110702 Madsen, Marie; f.; m.; husband; seaman; 1873; Minnesota; Allan

59430 110702 Madsen, Anna; f.; um.; daughter; 1900; Minnesota; Allan
 58385 040402 Nilsen, Nils Ludvig; m.; um.; mate; 1865; New York; White Star
 60014 110902 Nilsen, Nilsine; f.; um.; maid servant; 1882; New York; Thingvalla
 59559 070802 Nilsen, Tellef; m.; um.; steward; 1862; Chicago; Thingvalla
 59445 170702 Olsen, Gabriel; m.; -; seaman; 1851; Brooklyn; Thingvalla
 60353 201102 Olsen, Odine; f.; um.; maid servant; 1872; Minnesota; Thingvalla
 58025 260302 Salvesen, Alfred; m.; um.; carpenter; 1878; New York; Thingvalla
 58026 260302 Tellefsen, Daniel; m.; um.; seaman; 1879; New York; Thingvalla
 58027 260302 Tellefsen, Johannes; m.; um.; carpenter; -; New York; Thingvalla
 59311 050602 Tellefsen, John; m.; um.; seaman; 1878; New York; Thingvalla

1903

From Kristiansand:

38080 270303 Aanensen, Aanund; m.; um.; carpenter; 1881; New York; Anchor
 38169 020403 Aanonsen, Kristen; m.; m.: steward; 1870; New York; Thingvalla
 39545 210803 Andersen, Anders Gustav N.; m.; um.; farmer; 1874; New York; Thingvalla
 39654 270803 Andersen, Jens Gitmark; m.; farmer; 1853; North Dakota; Thingvalla
 37434 210203 Andersen, Thor; m.; um.; seaman; 1882; New York; White Star
 38691 010503 Andersen, Torjus; m.; um.; farmworker; 1884; Minnesota; White Star
 40266 151003 Eriksen, Ole Kristian; m.; m.; ship's master; 1848; New York; Thingvalla
 38085 270303 Halvorsen, Ole Abusland; m.; um.; farmworker; 1882; Minnesota; Cunard
 38086 270303 Halvorsen, Tarald Abusland; m.: um.; farmworker; 1886; Minnesota; Cunard
 38951 210503 Havstad, Katrine; f.; um.; housekeeper; 1870; New York; Thingvalla
 39653 270803 Jensen, Aasine; f.; seamstress; 1885; North Dakota; Thingvalla
 38207 030403 Jensen, Andreas Møgland; m.; m.; farmer; 1861; New York; Thingvalla
 38159 020403 Johansen, Jens Nærebø m.; um.; seaman; 1877; New York; Thingvalla
 39544 210803 Johnsen, Jørgen Martinius; m.; um.; farmer; 1874; New York; White Star
 39661 270803 Jørgensen, Nancy; f.; um.; maid servant; 1881; New York; Thingvalla
 38334 100403 Karlsen, Karl Metvedt; m.; um.; farmer; 1888; Illinois; White Star
 39660 270803 Karlsen, Marie; f.; m.; husband: seaman; 1880; New York; Thingvalla
 38079 270303 Knudsen, Edvard; m.; m.; mate; 1858; New York; Anchor
 38078 270303 Kristensen, Anders; m.; um.; steward; 1874; New York; Anchor
 39658 270803 Larsen, Ingvald Andr.; m.; m.; carpenter; 1875; New York; Thingvalla
 38692 010503 Olsen, Aanen Severin; m.; um.; farmworker; 1885; Minnesota; White Star
 39655 270803 Olsen, Johannes Hodne; m.; um.; blacksmith; 1886; Minnesota; White Star
 38694 010503 Olsen, Salve; m.; um.; farmworker; 1885; Minnesota; White Star
 38305 030403 Ommundsen, Halvor Volden; m.; m.; ship's master; 1863; New York; White Star
 40236 161003 Pedersen, Tellef Dalholt; m.; um.; carpenter; 1880; British Columbia; Allan
 38016 260303 Pettersen, Lovise; f.; um.; seamstress; 1871; New York; Thingvalla
 38160 020403 Salvesen, Peder; m.; m.; mate; 1877; Kansas; Thingvalla
 38161 020403 Salvesen, Sofie; f.; m.; husband: mate; 1880; Kansas; Thingvalla
 38162 020403 Salvesen, Aasta; f.; um.; daughter; 1901; Kansas; Thingvalla
 39663 270803 Salvesen, Kristian; m.; m./widower; farmer; 1824; New York; Thingvalla
 38163 020403 Svendsen, Helmer; m.; um.; seaman; 1877; Kansas; Thingvalla
 38430 160403 Svenden, Jens; m.; um.; worker; 1884; New York; Thingvalla
 40101 240903 Tobiassen, Ingeborg; f.; um.; maid servant; 1887; New York; Thingvalla

From Arendal:

342 230503 Christensen, Amalie; f.; um.; maid servant; 1882; New York; - (home on visit)

1904

From Kristiansand:

41761 020604 Andersen, Anna; f.; um.; maid servant; 1885; New York; Thingvalla
 41454 060504 Andersen, Karl Johan; m.; um.; farmworker; 1884; New York; Anchor
 41824 030604 Andreaesen, Anna Martea; f.; um.; maid servant; 1883; Montana; White Star
 41034 150404 Gundersen, Gustav Adolf; m.; um.; shopkeeper; 1886; New York; White Star
 40692 070404 Hansen, Bernt Fiskeland; m.; m.; farmer; 1862; New York; Thingvalla
 41548 060504 Hegdekjær, Anna; f.; m.; husband: carpenter; 1835; New York; Skandia
 41436 050504 Jakobsen, Kristian W.; m.; m.; carpenter; 1861; New York; Thingvalla

41437 050504 Jakobsen, Gunhild; f.; m.; husband: carpenter; 1856; New York; Thingvalla
 41438 050504 Jakobsen, Lars; m.; um.; son; 1886; New York; Thingvalla
 41439 050504 Jakobsen, Anna; f.; um.; daughter; 1892; New York; Thingvalla
 41666 260504 Jensen, Aase; f.; m.; husband: carpenter; 1857; New York; White Star
 41667 260504 Jensdatter, Ellen Jensen; f.; um.; daughter; 1885; New York; White Star
 41668 260504 Jensdatter, Johanne Jensen; f.; um.; daughter; 1890; New York; White Star
 41455 060504 Johansen, Johan Martin; m.; um.; seaman; 1876; New York; Anchor
 42373 080804 Johansen, Knud Hunedal; m.; um.; farmworker; 1886; Iowa; Cunard
 41758 020604 Knudsen, Knud Torjusen; m.; um.; carpenter; 1886; New York; Thingvalla
 42073 010704 Kristensen, Ellen Katrine; f.; um.; maid servant; 1885; New York; White Star
 43687 091204 Kristensen, Sofie Dalholt; f.; um.; maid servant; 1862; Kansas; Cunard
 40684 070404 Kristiansen, Alida; f.; um.; seamstress; 1879; New York; Thingvalla
 40509 310304 Kristoffersen, Anders; m.; um.; seaman; 1880; New York; Thingvalla
 Kverndalen, Salve Olsen; m. ; um. ; - ; - ; Dakota?; -

(Kiland, *archives*)

Lonebu, Ånon Severin; m.; um.; - ; 1885; Dakota?; -

(Kiland, *archives*)

42396 110804 Nilsen, Jensine; f.; um.; seamstress; 1871; New York; Thingvalla
 40685 070404 Nilsen, Olivia; f.; m.; husband: foreman; 1872; New York; Thingvalla
 40686 070404 Nilsen, Nils; m.; um.; son; 1893; New York; Thingvalla
 40687 070404 Nilsen, Olaf; m.: um.; son; 1894; New York; thingvalla
 41745 020604 Nilsen, Oline; f.; um.; maid servant; 1875; New York; Thingvalla
 40688 070404 Nilsen, Ida; f.; um.; daughter; 1897; New York; Thingvalla
 40689 070404 Nilsen, Liv; f.; um.; daughter; 1899; New York; Thingvalla
 40690 070404 Nilsen, Tone; f.; um.; daughter; 1901; New York; Thingvalla
 41762 020604 Olsen, Gunela Bakken; f.; um.; maid servant; 1886; New York; Thingvalla
 41456 060504 Olsen, Lars; m.; m.; carpenter; 1852; New York; Anchor
 40510 310304 Olsen, Ole Elias; m.; um.; farmworker; 1885; New York; Thingvalla
 42072 010704 Olsen, Ole Kristian; m.; m.; carpenter; 1866; New York; White Star
 43432 300904 Ommundsen, Tobias; m.; um.; farmworker; 1884; Illinois; Cunard
 42901 020904 Pedersen, Hans Skiftensen; m.; m.; boatbuilder; 1874; New York; Thingvalla
 41148 220404 Pedersen, Svend Olaus; m.; m.; carpenter; 1849; New York; White Star
 41669 260504 Svendsen, Jonas Grøslø; m.; m.; farmworker; 1875; New York; White Star
 41151 220404 Svendsen, Maren; f.; um.; maid servant; 1884; Kansas; White Star
 41146 220404 Svendsen, Salve G.; m.; um.; boy servant; 1888; Kansas; White Star
 41547 060504 Taraldsen, Tellef Hegdekjær; m.; m.; carpenter; 1840; New York; Skandia
 40673 070404 Tellefsen, Jørgen Theodor; m.; um.; seaman; 1881; New York; Thingvalla
 41672 260404 Torbjørnsen, Fredrik; m.; um.; farmworker; 1876; New York; White Star

From Arendal:

No registration

1905

From Kristiansand:

53002 120505 Aanonsen, Terje Tolleholmen; m.; m.; farmer; 1868; USA; Thingvalla
 53490 270505 Alsand, Johannes J.; m.; m.; mate; 1877; USA; Cunard
 52972 040505 Andersen, Gusta; f.; um.; maid servant; 1882; USA; Thingvalla
 52969 040505 Andersen, John Aanensen; m.; um.; farmworker; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 52984 040505 Andersen, Jørgen; m.; um.; steward; 1885; USA; Thingvalla
 52874 030505 Andersen, Marthe; f.; um.; maid servant; 1883; USA; Thingvalla
 53078 190505 Andreassen, Gunder; m.; um.; farmworker; 1888; USA; Cunard
 43786 270105 Andreassen, Søren; m.; m.; seaman; 1872; USA; White Star
 52918 040505 Didriksen, Anna; f.; um.; father: farmer; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 52916 040505 Eriksen, Kristine; f.; um.; maid servant; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 54476 241105 Gundersen, Nils Severin; m.; um.; shopkeeper; 1880; USA; White Star
 52575 060405 Gundersen, Thorvald; m.; um.; farmworker; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 52325 230305 Hansen, Alfred Martin; m.; um.; mate; 1875; USA; Thingvalla
 43770 260105 Haugland, Kirsti; f.; um.; maid servant; 1884; USA; White Star
 52354 240305 Heldaas, Ole; m.; um.; farmworker; 1887; USA; Cunard
 53995 070905 Jensen, Johanne; f.; um.; seamstress; 1884; USA; Thingvalla
 52334 230305 Jenssen, Jakob Kristian; m.; um.; shopkeeper; 1887; USA; Thingvalla

52549 060405 Jenssen, Mathilde; f.; um.; maid servant; 1882; USA; Thingvalla
 52981 040505 Johannesen, Salve Folkestad; m.; um.; boatbuilder; 1885; USA; Thingvalla
 52986 040505 Knudsen, Inga; f.; um.; maid servant; 1883; USA; Cunard
 53517 270505 Kristensen, Marthe; f.; um.; seamstress; 1882; USA; Thingvalla
 43768 260105 Kristiansen, Aanen; m.; um.; boy servant; 1883; USA; White Star
 54441 031105 Olafsen, Johan August; m.; um.; seaman; 1884; USA; White Star
 52357 240305 Olofsen, Soren Martin; m.; um.; farmworker; 1887; USA; Thingvalla
 54156 210905 Olsen, Nils Ingbret; m.; m.; ship master; 1870; USA; White Star
 44088 230205 Olsen, Olivia; f.; um.; maid servant; 1879; USA; Thingvalla
 44086 230205 Olufsen, Olivia; f.; um.; seamstress; 1879; USA; Thingvalla
 53003 120505 Ovesen, Knud Bakken; m.; um.; boatbuilder; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 44273 240205 Mathiassen, Torjus; m.; um.; mate; 1878; USA; White Star
 52335 230305 Mathiassen, John Jensen; m.; um.; seaman; 1885; USA; Cunard
 53514 270505 Mathiesen, Sofie; f.; m.; husband: seaman; 1875; USA; Thingvalla
 54079 080905 Nilsen, Anne Marie; f.; um.; maid servant; 1885; USA; Thingvalla
 44090 230205 Ommundsen, Johanne; f.; um.; maid servant; 1875; USA; Thingvalla
 52556 060405 Ommundsen, Peder; m.; um.; carpenter; 1880; USA; Thingvalla
 44109 230205 Pettersen, Karl Johan; m.; um.; worker; 1888; USA; Thingvalla
 52917 040505 Pettersen, Martha; f.; um.; father: farmer; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 53505 270505 Salvesen, Anton Elias; m.; um.; seaman; 1884; USA; Thingvalla
 53598 100805 Severinsen, Olaf Olsen Udjus; m.; um.; farmworker; 1890; USA; Thingvalla
 52576 060405 Svendsen, Syvert Emil; m.; um.; farmworker; 1875; USA; Thingvalla
 54477 241105 Tellefsen, Jørgen; m.; m.; driver; 1870; USA; Thingvalla

From Arendal:

No registration

1906

From Kristiansand:

56427 040506 Andersen, Johannes; m.; um.; farmworker; 1887; USA; Thingvalla
 56909 040806 Antonsen, Bent; m.; um.; seaman; 1885; USA; Anchor
 56744 220606 Børresen, Gustav; m.; um.; farmworker; 1886; USA; C.P.R.C.
 55048 160306 Børresen, Lauritz Severin; m.; um.; seaman; 1881; USA; Cunard
 56745 220606 Børresen, Therese; f.; um.; maid servant; 1885; USA; C.P.R.C.
 55042 160306 Christensen, Sven; m.; m.; carpenter; 1857; USA; Cunard
 55425 230306 Danielsen, Maren; f.; um.; maid servant; 1876; USA; White Star
 65413 040506 Didriksen, Dina; f.; um.; maid servant; 1889; USA; Thingvalla
 55900 060406 Edvardsen, Gustav A.; m.; um.; carpenter; 1885; USA; Thingvalla
 56732 150606 Edvardsen, Hilda; f.; um.; maid servant; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 56424 040506 Gundersen, Salvine; f.; um.; maid servant; 1884; USA; Thingvalla
 54777 080306 Hesvold, Andrea; f.; um.; maid servant; 1888; USA; Cunard
 56431 040506 Holte, Gusta; f.; um.; maid servant; 1883; USA; Thingvalla
 55475 230306 Jacobsen, Anton; m.; um.; farmworker; 1887; USA; Thingvalla
 55043 160306 Jacobsen, Bendix Kr.; m.; um.; carpenter; 1869; USA; Cunard
 55454 230306 Jørgensen, Oluf; m.; m.; carpenter; 1872; USA; Thingvalla
 55387 230306 Kittelsen, Johan M.; m.; um.; carpenter; 1877; USA; Thingvalla
 55449 230306 Kristoffersen, Karl; m.; um.; ship's master; 1865; USA; Thingvalla
 56474 180506 Larsen, Guline; f.; m.; husband: seaman; 1876; USA; Thingvalla
 56475 180506 Larsen, Agnes; f.; um.; daughter; 1902; USA; Thingvalla
 56570 180506 Larsen, John; m.; m.; seaman; 1872; USA; Thingvalla
 55450 230306 Legsen, Gunder; m.; um.; seaman; 1870; USA; White Star
 56416 040506 Lunden, Sofie Marie; f.; m.; husband: worker; 1881; USA; Thingvalla
 56417 040506 Lunden, Margot; f.; um.; daughter; 1903; USA; Thingvalla
 56418 040506 Lunden, John; m.; um.; son; 1904; USA; Thingvalla
 45524 161106 Mørkholt, Daniel Magnus G.; m.; um.; engineer; 1885; USA; Thingvalla
 55476 230306 Olsen, John Gustav; m.; um.; seaman; 1888; USA; Thingvalla
 54805 080306 Olsen, Thore; m.; um.; carpenter; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 45360 181006 Pedersen, Alida; m.; um.; maid servant; 1881; USA; Thingvalla
 56818 130706 Pedersen, Peder Kristian; m.; um.; mate; 1871; USA; Thingvalla
 55049 160306 Pettersen, Tellef Østerland; m.; um.; farmworker; 1889; USA; Cunard
 54953 090306 Sakariassen, Ole B. Olsen; m.; um.; butcher; 1886; USA; Thingvalla

55465 230306 Severinsen, Nils Tjore; m; um.; farmworker; 1883; USA; Thingvalla
 56197 200406 Syvertsen, Even; m.; um.; farmworker; 1888; USA; Thingvalla
 45161 210906 Thomassen, Ole Tobias; m.; um.; seaman; 1878; USA; Thingvalla
 55390 230306 Thorgrimsen, Ole; m.; um.; carpenter; 1864; USA; Thingvalla

From Arendal:

No registration

1907

From Kristiansand:

46244 070907 Andersen, Karl Johan; m.; um.; seaman; 1888; USA; White Star
 61089 230307 Børresen, Sigurd; m.; um.; farmworker; 1889; USA; Cunard
 46623 041007 Christiansen, Ragna; f.; m.; husband: worker; 1880; USA; Thingvalla
 Gunleifsen, Ole Moen; m; um; farm hand; 1890; Moray, Kansas; the *Teutonic*¹⁰
 45894 100807 Haaversen, Helmer Olaus; m.; m.; carpenter; 1866; USA; Anchor
 60710 150307 Hansson, Gusta; f.; um.; maid servant; 1889; USA; White Star
 45569 310507 Heldaas, Andreas G.; m.; m./widower; carpenter; 1861; USA; Thingvalla
 60875 210307 Helland, Ingeborg; f.; um.; maid servant; 1882; USA; Thingvalla
 46652 041007 Knudsen, Johanne; f.; um.; maid servant; 1887; USA; Thingvalla
 77878 150207 Knudsen, Jørgen Kristian; m.; -; mate; 1848; USA; Thingvalla
 77879 150207 Knudsen, Tellef; m.; -; seaman; 1853; USA; Thingvalla
 46467 200907 Larsen, Anton Sørleie; m.; um.; carpenter; 1884; USA; Thingvalla
 46413 200907 Lovdal, Olav Marius; m.; um.; seaman; 1888; USA; Thingvalla
 61338 050407 Nilsen, Gunhild; f.; um.; maid servant; 1877; USA; Thingvalla
 61339 050407 Nilsen, Gusta; f.; um.; daughter; 1892; USA; Thingvalla
 45674 140607 Nilsen, Ole Kristian; m.; m.; farmworker; 1865; USA; White Star
 61571 060407 Næss, Bertinius G. L.; m.; um.; boatbuilder; 1888; USA; Thingvalla
 45895 100807 Olsen, Anders Helleland; m.; um.; carpenter; 1888; USA; Anchor
 45957 220807 Olsen, Elise; f.; um.; seamstress; 1881; USA; Thingvalla
 45685 200607 Olsen, Fritz Eilert; m.; um.; son; 1891; USA; C.P.R.C.
 46905 011107 Olsen, Marie; f.; um.; maid servant; 1891; USA; Thingvalla
 46415 200907 Olsen, Olaf Morholt; m.; um.; stoker; 1882; USA; Thingvalla
 60882 210307 Pedersen, Anna; f.; um.; maid servant; 1889; USA; Thingvalla
 60881 210307 Pedersen, Margrethe; f.; um.; father: farmer; 1881; USA; Thingvalla
 46725 151007 Terjesen, Ingvald Wolden; m.; m.; mate; 1875; USA; Anchor
 45746 110707 Torgersen, Olaf Knaben; m.; um.; worker; 1857; USA; Allan

From Arendal:

No registration

1908

From Kristiansand:

76760 240408 Næsvold, Anna; f.; um.; maid servant; 1890; USA; Thingvalla
 77708 061108 Riserø, Marie Holthe; f.; um.; maid servant; 1885; USA; Thingvalla
 47004 100108 Sørensen, Andreas; m.; um.; seaman; 1889; USA; Cunard

Vollen, Andreas; settled in Brooklyn (year of emigration uncertain)
 married to Aase Vollen
 Ellen (daughter)

(Stalleland: 28)

From Arendal:

No registration

¹⁰ When he appeared before the authorities in Moray, KS, in 1916 to receive his citizenship, Ole Moen Gunleifsen was described in this way: *age 23; birthplace Reddal, Norway on 14 Sept., 1890. White, light complexion, blue eyes. Occupation: farmer. Emigrated from Liverpool, on the Teutonic, White Star Line. Port of entry, New York, 27 April, 1907. Resides at Moray, KS. Renounced King Haakon VII of Norway. Citizenship granted on 3 Nov. 1916.* Probate Index, Doniphan County, KS (1982). Troy Library, Troy, KS.

1909**From Kristiansand:**

65072 101209 Andersen, Jens Aagre m.; um.; seaman; 1890; USA; Thingvalla
 63628 210509 Andreassen, Peder; m.; um.; boatbuilder; 1888; USA; Thingvalla
 77966 290109 Antonsen, Ingeborg; f.; um.; maid servant; 1889; USA; Thingvalla
 77964 290109 Antonsen, Jacob; m.; um.; -; 1887; USA; Thingvalla
 63888 020709 Evensen, Jørgen Morholt; m.; m.; boatbuilder; 1881; USA; Thingvalla
 78032 120209 Henriksen, Andrea; f.; um.; maid servant; 1884; USA; Thingvalla
 64897 221009 Jensen, Jacobine; f.; um.; maid servant; 1889; USA; Thingvalla
 63220 230409 Jensen, Jensine; f.; um.; farmer; 1862; USA; Thingvalla
 63517 070509 Johnsen, Ellen; f.; um.; maid servant; 1891; USA; Thingvalla
 64913 221009 Knudsen, Anton Alfred; m.; um.; carpenter; 1891; USA; Thingvalla
 63755 040609 Knudsen, Ingeborg; f.; um.; maid servant; 1885; USA; Thingvalla
 64225 270809 Kristensen, Martin; m.; um.; boatbuilder; 1890; USA; Thingvalla
 63805 160609 Kristiansen, Olaf Th.; m.; um.; carpenter; 1892; USA; Thingvalla
 64266 270809 Olsen, Ingvald; m.; um.; seaman; 1889; USA; Anchor
 64901 221009 Olsen, Sigrid; f.; um.; maid servant; 1893; USA; Thingvalla
 63055 160409 Pedersen, Anna; f.; um.; maid servant; 1888; USA; Thingvalla
 61929 060309 Pedersen, Terje Skiftenes; m.; um.; carpenter; 1889; USA; White Star
 64801 081009 Salvesen, Klara; f.; um.; maid servant; 1892; USA; Thingvalla
 62848 140409 Solli, Marie; f.; um.; father: farmer; 1892; USA; Cunard
 63516 070509 Syvertsen, Johanne; f.; um.; maid servant; 1890; USA; Thingvalla
 63514 070509 Tharaldsen, Gunvor; f.; um.; maid servant; 1888; USA; Thingvalla
 77921 150109 Udjus, Kristine; f.; um.; father: farmer; 1892; USA; Thingvalla

From Arendal:

No registration

1910**From Kristiansand:**

48273 220410 Aanensen, Anders; m.; um.; farmer; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 48322 230410 Abrahamsen, Alfred Elias; m.; um.; farmer; 1890; USA; Thingvalla
 48310 230410 Abrahamsen, Tellef Andr.; m.; um.; farmer; 1878; USA; Thingvalla
 47612 260310 Andersen, Sigurd Julius; m.; um.; farmworker; 1889; USA; Anchor
 48841 030610 Bentsen, Thorvald Emanuel; m.; um.; carpenter; 1892; USA; Thingvalla
 48949 090710 Berntsen, Gustav Kristian; m.; um.; farmworker; 1892; USA; White Star
 47868 020410 Eriksen, Erik; m.; um.; farmworker; 1894; USA; Anchor
 48206 210410 Gundersen, Gustav; m.; um.; carpenter; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 47427 110310 Gundersen, Ingvald; m.; um.; carpenter; 1890; USA; Thingvalla
 48004 120410 Helland, Katrine; f.; um.; maid servant; 1880; USA; Thingvalla
 49515 090910 Henriksen, Agnes; f.; um.; maid servant; 1894; USA; Thingvalla
 47610 260310 Jacobsen, Ole Severin; m.; um.; boatbuilder; 1887; USA; Anchor
 48203 210410 Jensen, Ole; m.; um.; fisherman; 1891; USA; Thingvalla
 47615 260310 Johnsen, Halvor; m.; um.; farmworker; 1893; USA; Anchor
 47477 170310 Johnsen, Knut Hunsdal; m.; um.; farmworker; 1886; USA; White Star
 47478 170310 Knudsen, John; m.; um.; farmworker; 1889; USA; White Star
 48906 230610 Larsen, John Martin; m.; um.; farmworker; 1895; USA; Thingvalla
 48724 250510 Larsen, Ludvig Olsen; m.; um.; farmworker; 1894; USA; Thingvalla
 47905 080410 Larsen, Ragna; f.; um.; maid servant; 1891; USA; White Star
 48730 250510 Metvedt, Marthe; f.; um.; maid servant; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 48341 230410 Nilsen, Nils Kristian Gusdal; m.; um.; worker; 1887; USA; Thingvalla
 47255 040310 Nilsen, Nils Ludvig; m.; m.; seaman; 1865; USA; Thingvalla
 48789 270510 Olsen, Alfred Severinsen; m.; um.; farmworker; 1892; USA; Thingvalla
 48727 250510 Olsen, Anton Metvedt; m.; um.; farmer; 1878; USA; Thingvalla
 48948 090710 Olsen, Nils Anton; m.; um.; -; 1875; USA; White Star
 75437 140110 Olsen, Ole Johan; m.; um.; seaman; 1893; USA; Thingvalla
 47423 110310 Pedersen, Harald; m.; m.; carpenter; 1876; USA; Thingvalla
 47260 040310 Pedersen, Jørgen Alfred; m.; um.; mate; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 48642 200510 Pedersen, Karen; f.; um.; maid servant; 1890; USA; Thingvalla

48228 210410 Pedersen, Ole Jonas Dalholt; m.; um.; farmworker; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 48231 210410 Reinertsen, Peder Robert; m.; um.; farmer; 1890; USA; Thingvalla
 48728 250510 Salvesen, Guttorm Valbeland; m.; um.; worker; 1888; USA; Thingvalla
 48650 200510 Salvesen, Sigurd; m.; um.; farmworker; 1893; USA; Thingvalla
 48939 010710 Severinsen, Edvard Martin; m.; um.; farmworker; 1892; USA; Thingvalla
 47613 260310 Simonsen, Skröder Engene; m.; um.; farmworker; 1887; USA; Thingvalla
 48731 250510 Stie, Anna; f.; um.; maid servant; 1890; USA; Thingvalla
 47614 260310 Svendsen, Ragnvald; m.; um.; farmworker; 1882; USA; Achor
 49538 090910 Syvertsen, Gurine; f.; um.; maid servant; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 48190 210410 Tellefsen, Gunhild; f.; um.; maid servant; 1891; USA; Thingvalla
 75438 140110 Tønnesland, Anders; m.; um.; seaman; 1893; USA; Thingvalla

From Arendal:

2088 190210 Lindeløv, Sina; f.; m.; worker; 1888; Chicago; -

1911**From Kristiansand:**

51057 190511 Andersen, Anders Klausen; m.; um.; boatbuilder; 1890; USA; Thingvalla
 50087 100211 Andersen, Kristian; m.; um.; farmworker; 1891; USA; Thingvalla
 51754 290911 Berntsen, Anna; f.; um.; maid servant; 1895; USA; Thingvalla
 51753 290911 Danielsen, Johanne; f.; um.; maid servant; 1892; USA; Thingvalla
 50548 070411 Edvardsen, Tomas Anton; m.; um.; seaman; 1891; USA; Thingvalla
 51683 220911 Haugland, Kanutte; f.; um.; maid servant; 1893; USA; Thingvalla
 51147 020611 Johansen, Agnes; f.; um.; maid servant; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 51945 201011 Knudsen, Anna; f.; um.; maid servant; 1892; USA; Thingvalla
 51944 201011 Knudsen, Inger; f.; um.; shop assistant; 1889; USA; Thingvalla
 50359 240311 Kristiansen, Karl Rickard; m.; m.; fisherman; 1885; USA; White Star
 50054 100311 Kristofersen, Aasine; f.; um.; seamstress; 1884; USA; Thingvalla
 50592 070411 Matiasen, Terje Solid; m.; m.; worker; 1876; USA; Thingvalla
 50067 100311 Munch, Kaspar; m.; um.; boatbuilder; 1890; USA; Thingvalla
 50091 100311 Nærbø, Gunda; f.; um.; father: farmer; 1888; USA; Thingvalla
 50544 070411 Olsen, John Birkedal; m.; um.; farmworker; 1890; USA; Thingvalla
 50061 100311 Olsen, Marie; f.; um.; maid servant; 1891; USA; Thingvalla
 50539 070411 Olsen, Oskar Helleland; m.; um.; worker; 1895; USA; Thingvalla
 50904 270411 Olsen, Tomine Helleland; f.; um.; maid servant; 1893; USA; Thingvalla
 50052 100311 Rasmussen, Olga; f.; um.; seamstress; 1874; USA; Thingvalla
 50077 100311 Simonsen, Johannes; m.; um.; worker; 1889; USA; Thingvalla
 51291 020811 Torjussen, Fredrik Alfred; m.; um.; worker; 1889; USA; Allan Liverpool

From Arendal:

No registration

1912**From Kristiansand:**

65264 200312 Andersen, Karl Johan; m.; m.; seaman; 1859; USA; Anchor
 66630 270912 Bernsten, Anna; f.; um.; maid servant; 1889; USA; Thingvalla
 66614 270912 Didriksen, Tobine Elise; f.; um.; father: farmer; 1896; USA; Thingvalla
 66166 150612 Edvardsen, Ole Høgdekjær; m.; um.; seaman; 1887; USA; C.P.R.
 66041 170512 Evensen, Else Helleland; f.; m.; husband: farmer; 1855; USA; Thingvalla
 65617 050412 Hansen, Konstance Gustava; f.; um.; maid servant; 1888; USA; Thingvalla
 66042 170512 Helleland, Jensine Marie; f.; um.; daughter; 1903; USA; Thingvalla
 66043 170512 Helleland, Karen Helene; f.; um.; daughter; 1900; USA; Thingvalla
 66044 170512 Helleland, Inger Tonette; f.; um.; daughter; 1896; USA; Thingvalla
 66530 200912 Johnsen, Aase; f.; um.; farmer; 1872; USA; Thingvalla
 66628 270912 Johnsen, Ellen; f.; um.; maid servant; 1891; USA; Thingvalla
 66806 081112 Nilsen, Alevine Aune; f.; um.; father: worker; 1895; USA; Thingvalla
 66860 270912 Olsen, Martha Sofie; f.; um.; seamstress; 1888; USA; Thingvalla
 66529 200912 Reinertsen, John D.; m.; um.; farmworker; 1878; USA; Thingvalla
 65983 030512 Syvertsen, Karoline; f.; um.; maid servant; 1885; USA; Thingvalla

From Arendal:

No registration

1913**From Kristiansand:**

66985 140313 Aanensen, Jacob Haaø; m.; um.; seaman; 1893; USA; Thingvalla
 67873 130613 Edvardsen, Gunda Bjerkaas; f.; um.; maid servant; 1895; USA; Thingvalla
 67874 130613 Edvardsen, Karl Bjerkaas; m.; um.; farmworker; 1898; USA; Thingvalla
 68624 191113 Edvardsen, Karl Martin; m.; um.; seaman; 1889; USA; N.A.L.
 68120 260813 Eriksen, Maren; f.; um.; maid servant; 1898; USA; N.A.L.
 68329 190913 Gundersen, Anna Kristine; f.; um.; proprietress; 1875; USA; Thingvalla
 67859 110613 Gundersen, Ole Nordbø; m.; um.; farmworker; 1892; USA; Thingvalla
 68113 260813 Jamvold, Kristine Åmunda; f.; um.; at home; 1891; USA; N.A.L.
 66986 140313 Jensen, Jens Haaø; m.; um.; seaman; 1893; USA; Thingvalla
 67477 180413 Nilsen, Gusta Mathilde; f.; um.; maid servant; 1892; USA; Thingvalla
 68075 220813 Olsen, Sigrid Olivia; f.; um.; maid servant; 1891; USA; Thingvalla
 68061 220813 Pettersen, Hagbart; m.; um.; carpenter; 1894; USA; Thingvalla
 68588 311013 Pettersen, Johanne; f.; m.; husband; worker; 1882; USA; Thingvalla
 68589 311013 Pettersen, Karl; m.; um.; son; 1905; USA; Thingvalla
 68590 311013 Pettersen, Ingebret; m.; um.; son; 1908; USA; Thingvalla
 66906 070313 Thorkildsen, Therese Alfhilde; f.; um.; seamstress; 1888; USA; Thingvalla
 67729 160513 Torgrimsen, Alma Othilie; f.; um.; maid servant; 1896; USA; Thingvalla

From Arendal:

No registration

1914**From Kristiansand:**

34195 250314 Henriksen, Henrik Olaves; m.; um.; seaman; 1887; USA; Anchor
 34194 250314 Henriksen, Hartvig; m.; um.; seaman; 1894; USA; Anchor
 34610 100614 Herlofsen, Harald; m.; um.; farmworker; 1895; USA; N.A.L.
 34080 240314 Johansen, John; m.; um.; seaman; 1884; USA; N.A.L.
 34093 240314 Knudsen, Karoline Teresie; f.; um.; maid servant; 1897; USA; N.A.L.
 34849 120814 Larsen, Amanda Th.; f.; um.; maid servant; 1897; USA; N.A.L.
 34700 210714 Olsen, Kathrine; f.; um.; maid servant; 1892; USA; N.A.L.
 34851 120814 Olsen, Olava Teresie; f.; um.; maid servant; 1896; USA; N.A.L.
 34626 170614 Svendsen, Gertrud; f.; um.; maid servant; 1887; USA; N.A.L.

From Arendal:

No registration

1915**From Kristiansand:**

69884 040915 Gundersen, Agnes Marie; f.; um.; seamstress; 1892; USA; N.A.L.
 69885 040915 Gundersen, Betzy Gunhilde; f.; um.; seamstress; 1880; USA; N.A.L.
 70048 161015 Iversen, Amalie; f.; m.; husband; carpenter; 1882; USA; N.A.L.
 70088 061115 Johannesen, Laura Olevine; f.; um.; maid servant; 1896; USA; N.A.L.
 70089 061115 Larsen, Theresie; f.; um.; maid servant; 1893; USA; N.A.L.
 70084 061115 Nilsen, Kristine Næsvold; f.; m.; husband; carpenter; 1872; USA; N.A.L.
 70085 061115 Næsvold, Alfred Martinus; m.; um.; son; 1900; USA; N.A.L.
 70086 061115 Næsvold, Nils; m.; um.; son; 1903; USA; N.A.L.
 70087 061115 Næsvold, Nelly; f.; um.; daughter; 1907; USA; N.A.L.

From Arendal:

No registration

1916**From Kristiansand:**

71040 071016 Andersen, Erling Albert; m.; um.; farmworker; 1897; USA; N.A.L.
 70198 150316 Gundersen, Alfred; m.; um.; carpenter; 1897; USA; N.A.L.

70407 070416 Havstad, Kathrine; f.; um.; maid servant; 1871; USA; N.A.L.
 70668 030616 Jahnsen, Ingeborg; f.; m.; husband: carpenter; 1886; USA; N.A.L.
 70669 030616 Jahnsen, John Erik; m.; um.; son; 1910; USA; N.A.L.
 70670 030616 Jahnsen, Olaf Gordon; m.; um.; son; 1914; USA; N.A.L.
 70671 030616 Jahnsen, Albert Anton; m.; um.; son; 1912; USA; N.A.L.
 70666 030616 Jahnsen, Sigrid; f.; m.; husband: carpenter; 1891; USA; N.A.L.
 70667 030616 Jahnsen, Gerda Othilie; f; um.; daughter; 1914; USA; N.A.L.
 70921 220916 Knudsen, Grete Sofie; f.; m./ widow (provided for by children); 1847; USA; Thingvalla
 71203 081216 Knudsen, Olaf Ragnvald; m.; um.; boatbuilder; 1896; USA; Thingvalla
 70396 010416 Kristensen, Terje Langemyr; m.; um.; carpenter; 1879; USA; N.A.L.
 70908 160916 Salvesen, Aasta; f.; um.; maid servant; 1898; USA; N.A.L.
 70197 150316 Tellefsen, Thorleiv; m.; um.; carpenter; 1897; USA; N.A.L.
 70932 220916 Thorkildsen, Edvard Martin; m.; um.; carpenter; 1892; USA; N.A.L.

From Arendal:

No registration

1917**From Kristiansand:**

68882 110417 Pedersen, Eivind Martin; m.; um.; seaman; 1897; USA; N.A.L.

From Arendal:

No registration

1918**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

From Arendal:

No registration

1919**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

From Arendal:

No registration

1920**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

From Arendal:

No registration

1921**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

From Arendal:

No registration

1922**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

From Arendal:

No registration

1923**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

From Arendal:

No registration

1924**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

From Arendal:

No registration

1925**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

From Arendal:

No registration

1926**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

From Arendal:

No registration

1927**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

From Arendal:

5215 181027 Olsen, Aanon Helmer Birkelund; m.; um.; worker; 1904; USA; -

1928**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

From Arendal:

5345 290328 Gundersen, Olav; m.; um.; farmer; 1909; USA; -

1929**From Kristiansand:**

No Registratio

From Arendal:

No registration

1930**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

From Arendal:

No registration

Table Four. 1.
Emigrants from Landvik Parish to America; men, women, and children: 1840-1930;
compared 1840-1859 to Tveiten's findings (= T.):

Year	Number	T.
1840	0	0
1841	0	0
1842	0	0
1843	0	0
1844	6	6
1845	0	5
1846	18	24
1847	0	0
1848	18	15
1849	48	39
1850	11	11
1851	2	2
1852	1	2
1853	11	9
1854	14	14
1855	2	0
1856	3	2
1857	2	2
1858	1	1
1859	0	0
1860	0	
1861	0	
1862	3	
1863	0	
1864	0	
1865	0	
1866	0	
1867	0	
1868	0	
1869	0	
1870	0	

1871	6
1872	0
1873	7
1874	0
1875	1
1876	3
1877	0
1878	0
1879	4
1880	0
1881	3
1882	2
1883	8
1884	0
1885	2
1886	3
1887	13
1888	22
1889	5
1890	7
1891	9
1892	10
1893	12
1894	10
1895	16
1896	11
1897	10
1898	16
1899	18
1900	19
1901	14
1902	23

1903	33
1904	43
1905	40
1906	36
1907	25
1908	3
1909	22
1910	41
1911	21
1912	15
1913	17
1914	9
1915	9
1916	15
1917	1
1918	0
1919	0
1920	0
1921	0
1922	0
1923	0
1924	0
1925	0
1926	0
1927	1
1928	1
1929	0
1930	0
SUM	726

B. EMIGRATION FROM EIDE PARISH, 1840 - 1930**1840**

No registration

1841

No registration

1842

No registration

1843

No registration

1844

No registration

1845

No registration

1846

Emigrants from Eide Parish are listed among the other emigrants from Landvik Parish; they were part of the same group who left Grimstad in September, 1846 on the *Grethe Lovise*. From Eide Parish they were 5 adults and 11 children.

1847

No registration

1848

Elise Christiansdatter Ørevig, born 1817
(passport protocols).

1849

Terje Andreas Christiansen Enge, 28 ½ years old, her son; a farmworker

Married to Maren Øvensdatter Bærli

Ingeborg Andreasdatter Enge, 60 years old; Terje's mother

Marte Ingeborgdatter Enge, 21 years old; her daughter

(Tveiten: 134; *Iglandsætten*; church records, Eide Parish; passport protocols).

Ole Olsen M. Dannevig, 27 years old

Sara Pedersdatter, 24 years old (Peder Nilsen Kalvehaven's daughter)

Mathias Henrik Olsen, 1 ½ year old (son)

(Church records, Eide Parish, passport protocols).

Knud Jacobsen Bjelleraas, 24 ½ years old

(Church records, Eide Parish; passport protocols).

1850

Ole Nilsen Rørmoen, 52 years old, a farmer

married to Anne Gurine Olsdatter, 32 years old

Aasille Andrea Olsdatter, 12 years old (daughter)

Nils Olsen, 10 ½ years old (son)

Olava Alida Olsdatter, 5 years old (daughter)

Maren Christine Olsdatter, 7 years old (daughter)

Ole Edv. Olsen, 2 ¼ years old (daughter)

Gusta Regine Olsdatter, $\frac{3}{4}$ year old (daughter)
(Church records, Eide Parish; passport protocols).

1851

No registration

1852

No registration

1853

No registration

1854

Thomas Nicolai Johannessen, 26 years old; a seaman
Rasmus Johannessen, 24 years old; a seaman
Inger Marie Johannesdatter, 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ years old; a maid
Maren Andrea Johannesdatter, 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ years old; a maid
(Church records, Eide Parish; passport protocols).

1855

No registration

1856

No registration

1857

No registration

1858

No registration

1859

No registration

1860

No registration

1861

No registration

1862

No registration

1863

No registration

1864

No registration

1865

No registration

1866

No registration

1867

No registration

1868

No registration

1869

No registration

1870

No registration

1871

No registration

1872

No registration

1873

No registration

1874

No registration

1875

The following registrations are based upon *Emigrantprotokoller I-VI*, Kristiansand politidistrikt. Statsarkivet, Kristiansand/ *State Archives*.

No registration

1876

No registration

1877

No registration

1878

No registration

1879

No registration

1880

No registration

1881

No registration

1882

Aanensen, O. T.; 36; Eide; worker; 25/5-82; -; -; um.
 Olsen, Jens; 36; Eide; carpenter; 14/4-82; -; -; m.
 Olsen, Caroline; 30; Eide; wife; 14/4-82;-; -; m.
 Olsen, Oscar; 8; Eide; son; 14/4-82; -; -; um.
 Olsen, Carl; 4; Eide; son; 14/4-82; -; -; um.
 Olsen, Inga; 2; Eide; daughter; 14/4-82; -; -; um.
 Olsen, Caroline; ½ ; Eide; daughter; 14/4-82; -; -; um.

1883

No registration

1884

No registration

1885

No registration

1886

No registration

1887

Aanonsen, Ida; 32; Eide; wife; 21/5-87; Wisconsin; Bremer; m.
 Aanonsen, Nils Kristian; 36; Eide; seaman; 21/5-87; Wisconsin; Bremer; m.
 Aanonsen, Axel; ½; Eide; son; 21/5-87; Wisconsin; Bremer; um.
 Enge, Gusta Torjusen; 32; Eide; maid servant; 22/7-87; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Gundersen, Nils; 33; Eide; seaman; 15/4-87; New York; State; um.

1888

Danielsen, Anders; 1867; Eide; student; 13/4-88; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Evensen, Edvard; 1859; Eide; carpenter; 6/4-88; New York; National; m.
 Evensen, Nils; 1857; Eide; carpenter; 6/4-88; New York; National; m.
 Førenæs, Kristian; 1846; Eide; mate; 17/8-88; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Gundersen, Nils; 1854; Eide; worker; 24/3-88; New York; National; m.
 Holst, Marie; 1867; Eide; maid servant; 16/8-88; Kansas; Thingvalla; um.
 Johannesen, Carl; 1867; Eide; carpenter; 20/4-88; Boston; "Nedelandsk"; um.
 Jørgensen, Halvar; 1826; Eide; carpenter; 17/3-88; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Madsen, Martin; 1858; Eide; mate; 16/8-88; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Olsen, Jens Arnevig; 1840; Eide; farmer; 13/4-88; New York; Thingvalla; widower
 Olsen, Otto Landvig; 1871; Eide; seaman; 17/8-88; Kansas; Thingvalla; um.
 Svenningsen, Magna; 1868; Eide; maid servant; 16/8-88; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Tellefsen, Anders; 1866; Eide; blacksmith; 23/3-88; New York; White Star; um.
 Woksholt, Anton; 1847; Eide; seaman; 20/4-88; Boston; "Nedelandsk"; m.

1889

Christensen, Anna; 1868; Eide; maid servant; 15/3-89; New York; Inman; um.
 Olsen, Severin; 1856; Eide; seaman; 22/3-89; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Stendal, Christian; 1862; Eide; seaman; 17/5-89; New York; Thingvalla; um.

1890

Pedersen, Sofie; 22; Eide; maid servant; 12/9-90; New York; White Star; um.

1891

Kristiansen, Søren; 1864; Eide; seaman; 13/3-91; New York; Guion; um.
 Nilsen, Ole; 1867; Eide; carpenter; 20/3-91; New York; Cunard; um.

Olsen, Severin; 1856; Eide; seaman; 20/3-91; New York; White Star; um.

1892

Evensen, Nils; 1857; Eide; carpenter; 28/4-92; New York; Thingvalla; m. (left for the 2. time)
 Johnsen, Carl; 1867; Eide; carpenter; 18/3-92; Boston; Thingvalla; um.
 Kristensen, Andreas; 1865; Eide; seaman; 2/4-92; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Kristiansen, Anne; 1863; Eide; seamstress; 22/7-92; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Nilsen, Annie; 1872; Eide; maid servant; 13/5-92; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Stendal, Kristian; 1862; Eide; mate; 13/4-92; New York; Thingvalla; um. (left for the 2. time)

1893

Christiansen, Peder Johan; 1870; Eide; seaman; 21/4-93; New York; Scandia; m.
 Guttormsen, Lydia; 1884; Eide; - ; 9/6-93; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Johansen, Johan Helmer; 1869; Eide; mate; 9/6-93; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Markussen, Karsten Joakim; 1861; Eide; ship's master; 16/6-93; New York; Scandia; m.
 Norbeck, Katrine; 1869; Eide; maid servant; 9/6-93; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Svenningsen, S.; 1870; Eide; mate; 5/6-93; New York; Scandia; um.

1894

Andersen, Ida; 1865; Eide; maid servant; 25/1-94; New York; White Star; um.
 Gundersen, Nils; 1854; Eide; mate; 12/4-94; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Jansen, Rasmus; 1840; Eide; seaman; 29/3-94; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Lindvet, Gustav T.; 1874; Eide; seaman; 5/10-94; New York; Scandia; um.
 Olsen, Andreas K.; 1862; Eide; ship's master; 5/1-94; Boston; American; m.
 Sørensen, Elias; 1847; Eide; seaman; 5/10-94; New York; Scandia; m.
 Sørensen, Ole; 1859; seaman; 16/8-94; New York; Thingvalla; m.

1895

Evensen, Edvard; 1859; Eide; seaman; 4/4-95; New York; Thingvalla; m. (left for the 2. time)
 Gjertsen, Gunvald; 1876; Eide; seaman; 13/6-95; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Holst, Klara; 1870; Eide; waitress; 13/9-95; New York; Scandia; um.
 Jørgensen, Nicolai; 1844; Eide; ship's master; 13/6-95; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Nilsen, Ole; 1867; Eide; seaman; 25/7-95; New York; Thingvalla; m. (left for the 2. time)
 Nilsen, Valborg; 1867; Eide; maid servant; 25/7-95; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Olsen, Marie; 1867; Eide; wife; 20/9-95; New York; Scandia; m.
 Olsen, Severin; 1856; Eide; seaman; 13/9-95; New York; Scandia; um.
 Osmundsen, Osmund; 1848; Eide; mate; 4/4-95; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Stendal, Kristian; 1862; Eide; mate; 21/3-95; New York; Thingvalla; um. (left for the 3. time)

1896

No registration

1897

No registration

1898

Holst, Klara; 1881; Eide; maid servant; 22/4-98; New York; Thingvalla; um.
 Nilsen, Olaf D.; 1873; Eide; mate; 6/10-98; New York; Scandinavian-American; m.
 Osmundsen, Olivia M.; 1854; Eide; wife; 22/4-98; New York; White Star; m.
 Pedersen, Kathrine; 1880; Eide; at home; 14/1-98; New York; White Star; um.
 Sørensen, Ole; 1859; Eide; seaman; 4/11-98; New York; White Star; m. (left for the 2. time)

1899

Evensen, Edvard A.; 1859; Eide; mate; 27/1-99; New York; White Star; m. (left for the 3. time)
 Jacobsen, Petter; 1861; Eide; mate; 6/4-99; New York; Thingvalla; m.
 Olsen, Nils Dannevig; 1874; Eide; seaman; 23/3-99; New York; Thingvalla; um.

1900

No registration

1901

Registrations in the period 1901 – 1930 are based upon the emigration lists, Kristiansand politidistrikt (1901-30), and the same kind of lists from Arendal politidistrikt (1903-30); digitalized at Riksarkivet/ *National Archives*:

www.riksarkivet.no

Information: reg. no.; date of emigration (day/month/year); name; male/female; married/ unmarried; occupation (also “children”); year of birth; destination; shipping line.

37200 081101 Bentsen, Conrad; m; um; farmworker; 1881; Baltimore; White Star
 36979 190901 Jakobsen, Johan Petter; m; m; mate; 1861; New York; Thingvalla
 36449 140601 Sørensen, Søren M.; m; um; seaman; 1878; New York; Thingvalla

1902

58564 100402 Ellingsen, Henning G.; m; m; ship’s master; 1854; New York; Thingvalla
 58543 100402 Nilsen, Gustav; m; m; seaman; 1860; New York; Thingvalla

1903**From Kristiansand:**

37749 200303 Bentsen, Jens L.; m; um; blacksmith; 1878; New York; White Star
 38190 020403 Sørensen, Elise; f; um; maid servant; 1882; New York; Thingvalla
 39546 210803 Tomassen, Martinus L.; m; um; seaman; 1883; New York; White Star

1903**From Arendal:**

831 241003 Markussen, Oskar M.; m; m; seaman; 1878; New York; -
 832 241003 Thomassen, Kristian M.; m; um; seaman; 1880; New York; -

1904**From Kristiansand:**

41497 060504 Berg, Bernt Bugge; m; um; farmworker; 1884; New York; Anchor
 40642 070404 Gjertsen, Margrethe; f; um; father: teacher; 1889; New York; Thingvalla
 41671 260504 Gjertsen, Torleif Lindtveit; m; m; painter; 1878; New York; White Star
 40508 090704 Hansen, Karel Martin; m; m; seaman; 1866; New York; Thingvalla
 40990 140404 Nilsen, Peder Antoni; m; um; carpenter; 1885; New York; Thingvalla
 40680 070404 Rasmussen, Ole; m; m; mason; 1860; New York; White Star
 41670 260504 Samuelsen, Anders Gustav; m; um; farmworker; 1876; Baltimore; White Star
 41907 090604 Sørensen, Karen Tobine; f; widow; farmer; 1852; New York; Thingvalla
 41908 090604 Sørensen, Karel; m; um; child; 1893; New York; Thingvalla

1904**Arendal:**

No registration

1905**Kristiansand:**

52550 060405 Arnevig, Anne B.; f; m; husband: seaman; 1872; USA; Thingvalla
 52551 060405 Arnevig, Jens; m; um; child; 1902; USA; Thingvalla
 53204 010605 Bentsen, Erik Gitmark; m; um; blacksmith; 1890; USA; Thingvalla
 53205 010605 Bentsen, Teodor; m; um; worker; 1885; USA; Thingvalla
 54367 191005 Lie, Emilie; f; um; maid servant; 1882; USA; Thingvalla
 52574 060405 Nilsen, Kristian R.; m; m; painter; 1879; USA; Thingvalla
 52564 060405 Severinsen, Søren Bernhard; m; um; mate; 1878; USA; Thingvalla

1905**From Arendal:**

No registration

1906**From Kristiansand:**

55284 230306 Aanonsdatter, Ingeborg; f; um; maid servant; 1869; USA; White Star
 44647 310806 Andersen, Gunnar; m; m; mechanic; 1880; USA; Thingvalla
 45138 210906 Andersen, Ole Johan; m; um; farmworker; 1887; USA; Thingvalla
 56370 040506 Carlsen, Johanne Casandra; f; um; maid servant; 1888; USA; Thingvalla
 45451 191006 Danielsen, Anders; m; um; -; 1892; USA; Thingvalla
 44888 070906 Evensen, Gustav Adolf; m; um; -; 1891; USA; Thingvalla
 56365 040506 Gjertsen, Karl Thedor; m; um; seaman; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 55448 230306 Hansen, Anders Olaus; m; m; mate; 1850; USA; Thingvalla
 45153 210906 Johannesen, Knud; m; um; farmworker; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 55156 220306 Johansen, Hans Forsdal; m; um; mechanic; 1882; USA; Thingvalla
 56894 270706 Jortveit, Anne; f; um; maid servant; 1889; USA; Thingvalla
 45146 210906 Nilsen, Even; m; um; seaman; 1884; USA; Thingvalla
 56975 100806 Nilsen, Kristine; f; m; husband; worker; 1872; USA; Thingvalla
 56976 100806 Nilsen, John; m; um; child; 1904; USA; Thingvalla
 55500 230306 Nilsen, Nils; m; um; carpenter; 1877; USA; Thingvalla
 56371 040406 Nyberg, Johanne Marie; f; m; husband; carpenter; 1877; USA; Thingvalla
 45174 210906 Olsen, John Nicolai; m; um; seaman; 1884; USA; Thingvalla
 56469 160506 Poulsen, Inga Marie; f; um; house manager; 1875; USA; Thingvalla
 56366 040506 Reinertsen, Samuel Bernhard; m; m; mate; 1874; USA; Thingvalla
 45152 210906 Terjesen, Nils; m; um; mate; 1879; USA; Thingvalla

1906**From Arendal:**

No registration

1907**From Kristiansand:**

46406 200907 Andersen, Aasta; f; um; father: mate; 1890; USA; Thingvalla
 46772 181007 Andersen, Olava; f; um; maid servant; 1889; USA; Thingvalla
 61451 050407 Antonsen, Søren; m; um; driver; 1891; USA; Cunard
 61551 060407 Bentsen, Olaf Lindtvedt; m; um; blacksmith; 1888; USA; Cunard
 61552 060407 Berg, Emil Helmer; m; um; farmworker; 1887; USA; Cunard
 77833 080207 Dahl, Bertha; f; um; maid servant; 1889; USA; Thingvalla
 61320 050407 Gundersen, Jens Vilmæs; m; um; seaman; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 61553 060407 Knudsen, Ole Svenæs; m; um; steward; 1883; USA; Thingvalla
 46201 060907 Olsen, Marie; f; um; father: carpenter; 1890; USA; Thingvalla
 61564 060407 Olsen, Terkel; m; m; carpenter; 1865; USA; Cunard
 61462 050407 Svendsen, Aanon; m; m; farmworker; 1880; USA; Cunard
 46410 200907 Svenæs, Kristine; f; um; maid servant; 1878; USA; Thingvalla
 61554 060407 Tomassen, Torvald Alfred; m; um; seaman; 1891; USA; Cunard

1907**From Arendal:**

No registration

1908**From Kristiansand:**

77234 280808 Karlsten, Nilsine T.; f; um; maid servant; 1891; USA; Thingvalla
 77233 280808 Olsen, Maren K.; f; um; maid servant; 1887; USA; Thingvalla

1908**From Arendal:**

No registration

1909**From Kristiansand:**

64483 230909 Enge, Olivia; f; widow; midwife; 1859; USA; Cunard
 64484 230909 Enge, Gunda; f; um; child; 1887; USA; Cunard
 64485 230909 Enge, Trine; f; um; child; 1893; USA; Cunard
 63886 020709 Johannesen, Jonas Kristian; m; um; shopkeeper; 1893; USA; Thingvalla
 65073 101209 Johnsen, Ingeborg Atlanta; f; um; maid servant; 1891; USA; Thingvalla
 65052 271109 Lee, Ragna; f; m; husband: electrician; 1875; USA; U. Castle
 65053 271109 Lee, Arne; m; um; child; 1907; USA; U. Castle
 64905 221009 Mathisen, Mimi; f; um; maid servant; 1889; USA; Thingvalla
 63635 210509 Olsen, Andrea; f; um; maid servant; 1888; USA; Thingvalla

1909**From Arendal:**

No registration

1910**From Kristiansand:**

48247 220410 Ellingsen, Elling A.; m; um; seaman; 1882; USA; Thingvalla
 48255 220410 Evensen, Edvin Anton; m; um; farmworker; 1892; USA; Thingvalla
 49079 120810 Gjertsen, Gjert Lie; m; um; farmworker; 1892; USA; Thingvalla
 49169 190810 Gundersen, Ole; m; um; worker; 1867; USA; Cunard
 49512 090910 Johannesen, Klara; f; um; maid servant; 1884; USA; Thingvalla
 48207 210410 Olsen, Thore; m; um; carpenter; 1886; USA; Thingvalla
 49536 090910 Wessø, Birgitte; f; um; maid servant; 1884; USA; Thingvalla

1910**From Arendal:**

No registration

1911**From Kristiansand:**

50406 290311 Gjertsen, Thomas J.; m; um; seaman; 1884; USA; Cunard
 50092 100311 Johnsen, Josefine; f; um; father: farmer; 1891; USA; Thingvalla
 51180 160611 Kjækstad, Jørgen M.; m; um; boatbuilder; 1887; USA; Thingvalla
 51814 061011 Olsen, Inga Eide; f; um; maid servant; 1891; USA; Thingvalla
 52018 171111 Olsen, Thora; f; m; husband: waiter; 1879; USA; Thingvalla
 50971 050511 Syvertsen, Ingvald Eide; m; um; farm worker; 1891; USA; Thingvalla
 50547 070411 Tobiassen, John Edoni; m; um; farm worker; 1893; USA; Thingvalla

1911**From Arendal:**

No registration

1912**From Kristiansand:**

66484 200912 Evensen, Marie; f; um; father: farmer; 1895; USA; Thingvalla
 66483 200912 Johannesen, Ruth; f; um; father: mate; 1895; USA; Thingvalla
 66859 161212 Nilsen, Peder Andreas; m; um; carpenter; 1870; USA; White Star

1912**From Arendal:**

No registration

1913**From Kristiansand:**

66905 070313 Evensen, Anna Math.; f; m; husband: carpenter; 1864; USA; Thingvalla
 68178 260813 Gitmark, Anna; f; um; maid servant; 1893; USA; N.A.L.
 67502 180413 Hansen, Anton Emil; m; um; stoker; 1894; USA; Thingvalla
 68002 080813 Johannesen, Kitty; f; um; maid servant; 1896; USA; Thingvalla
 68118 260813 Jørgensen, Thora Lindtvedt; f; um; maid servant; 1891; USA; N.A.L.
 67340 040413 Sørensen, Grethe Githmark; f; um; father: farmer; 1895; USA; Thingvalla

1913**From Arendal:**

No registration

1914**From Kristiansand:**

34524 060514 Jørgensen, Jørgen Emanuel L.; m; um; seaman; 1894; USA; N.A.L.

1914**From Arendal:**

25744173 250314 Eide, Gustav A.; m; um; seaman; 1895; USA; -

1915**From Kristiansand:**

68697 190215 Jakobsen, Thomas Svennevig; m; um; seaman; 1895; USA; Thingvalla
 69607 220515 Johnsen, Karen; f; um; maid servant; 1884; USA; N.A.L.

1915**From Arendal:**

No registration

1916**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

1916**From Arendal:**

No registration

1917**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

1917**From Arendal:**

No registration

1918**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

1918**From Arendal:**

No registration

1919**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

1919**From Arendal:**

No registration

1920**From Kristiansand:**

71663 271020 Bentsen, Erik Githmark; m; m; carpenter; 1890; USA; N.A.L. (Left for the 2. time)

1920**From Arendal:**

No registration

1921**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

1921**From Arendal:**

No registration

1922**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

1922**From Arendal:**

334017 170322 Tobiassen, Torvald; m; m; carpenter; 1889; USA; -

1923**From Kristiansand:**

No registration

1923**From Arendal:**

No registration

1924**From Kristiansand:**

72248 120924 Tellefsen, Anders; m; m; mechanic; 1866; USA; United States

1924**From Arendal:**

No registration

1925

From Kristiansand:

No registration

1925

From Arendal:

No registration

1926

From Kristiansand:

No registration

1926

From Arendal:

No registration

1927

From Kristiansand:

No registration

1927

From Arendal:

No registration

1928

From Kristiansand:

No registration

1928

From Arendal:

No registration

1929

From Kristiansand:

No registration

1929

From Arendal:

No registration

1930

From Kristiansand:

No registration

1930

From Arendal:

No registration

Table Four. 2.***Emigrants from Eide Parish to America; men, women, and children: 1840-1930:***

Year	Number				
1840	0	1872	0	1905	7
1841	0	1873	0	1906	20
1842	0	1874	0	1907	13
1843	0	1875	0	1908	2
1844	0	1876	0	1909	9
1845	0	1877	0	1910	7
1846	16	1878	0	1911	7
1847	0	1879	0	1912	3
1848	1	1880	0	1913	6
1849	6	1881	0	1914	1
1850	8	1882	7	1915	2
1851	0	1883	0	1916	0
1852	0	1884	0	1917	0
1853	0	1885	0	1918	0
1854	4	1886	0	1919	0
1855	0	1887	5	1920	1
1856	0	1888	14	1921	1
1857	0	1889	3	1922	1
1858	0	1890	1	1923	0
1859	0	1891	3	1924	1
1860	0	1892	6	1925	0
1861	0	1893	6	1926	0
1862	0	1894	7	1927	0
1863	0	1895	10	1928	0
1864	0	1896	0	1929	0
1865	0	1897	0	1930	0
1866	0	1898	5	SUM	204
1867	0	1899	3		
1868	0	1900	0		
1869	0	1901	3		
1870	0	1902	2		
1871	0	1903	5		
		1904	9		

PART FIVE:

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