

The Immigrants' Trek

**A Detailed History of the Lake Hendricks
Colony in Brookings County, Dakota
Territory, from 1873-1881**

By

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FORWARD

Details of the information gathered for the story of *The Immigrants' Trek* were obtained largely through the cooperation of C. N. Trooien, of Astoria, South Dakota. He spent considerable time in conferences with Hans Digre and Ole Fjeseth, pioneers of the Lake Hendricks colony, and in accumulating facts from various other sources.

Additional details of the early history of the colony were obtained from Mrs. Ole Fjeseth, Mrs. Nels Trooien and Mrs. Ole Trooien, also survivors of the first colony to reach Lake Hendricks. Valuable assistance in promoting the task of gathering information and publishing the story was given by Carl N. Trooien, of Hendricks, Minnesota, at whose suggestion the project first was attempted.

The object in writing and publishing the story was to furnish a record of the facts concerning the exploits of the pioneer colony that first settled at Lake Hendricks, and of the history of the first years of the life of the settlement. In the narrative an attempt has been made to state nothing but actual facts, such as they are recalled by the pioneers still living. The story here told ends with an account of the first great "Snow winter," in 1880-1881. Names of the members of Lake Hendricks and Fish Lake colonies that settled those communities in 1873 are recorded, as well as the names of all other pioneers who settled in the Lake Hendricks vicinity between that year and the fall of the year 1880.

The Immigrants' Trek

Chapter I

A GENTLE spring breeze played idly with the flapping canvasses that hung loose over the front and rear of the "prairie schooners." Overhead the sun slowly traced its path upward across a cloudless sky until it reached its zenith.

Flattening under the tread of oxen's feet and the slowly revolving, rumbling wagon wheels, the rich prairie grass lay for a moment on the earth, then again arose with its tops reaching out for the warm spring air and the sunlight that had newly started its luxuriant growth of the year.

Seated in the canvas hooded wagons that were slowly winding their way across the abrupt hills and valleys of northeastern Iowa were a number of Norwegian immigrants. Behind them straggled a little herd of cattle, pausing at times to gather mouthfuls of the inviting grass whose verdure carpeted the ground on which they trod, then reluctantly raising their heads again to pursue the caravan of wagons that slowly led the way toward the northwest.

The boundary line of Iowa and Minnesota was passed just as the sun began its downward course after passing the noonday mark. About mid afternoon the party halted on a hillcrest from which the prairie toward the northeast was visible for many miles. Expectant eyes peered off in that direction from the openings in the ends of the canvasses that were fastened in a high arch above each wagon.

As the travelers gazed into the distance, shading their eyes with hands cupped in front of their foreheads, their searching glances were rewarded by the sight of another group of wagons approaching across the summit of a distant hill. The faintly visible caravan dipped into a hollow and was lost to view. Slowly it emerged again on another rise of land, and as the watchers followed its movement it steadily crept nearer.

The two groups of wagons met near the spot where Mabel, Minnesota, now is situated. They were all immigrants from the vicinity of Trondheim, Norway, having arrived in this country within the course of the last few years. After arriving in America they had settled, some in Houston county Minnesota, and some in Allamakee and Winneshiek counties, Iowa.

Finding the land there already well populated they determined to venture upon the hazardous and toilsome journey across the wild prairies to a new region in Dakota Territory. No one had any particular destination in mind. They all were venturing out into a new country, which none of the party ever had seen, and over which few white men ever had trod. Their future homes were to lie in whatever region they found appealing to their taste.

Although they had come to different states in this country, these pioneers were all from the same neighborhood in Norway, and when they learned of each others presence in adjoining states here they planned the journey to the west together and so set a place and date for the meeting that already has been described in southeastern Minnesota.

Several hours of the day yet remained when the two caravans joined forces, and they continued their

slow journey behind the plodding ox teams until the sun began to sink in the distant horizon. True followers of the famous Vikings of their fatherland whose daring exploits centuries earlier had carried them to the shores of the New World long before other white men cast their eyes upon it, these hardy immigrants set their faces to the west, as their predecessors had done, and before the break of another day they were plodding on again over the rolling prairies that stretched before them.

The members of this group of pioneers were Mr. and Mrs. John Knutson and three children, Peder, Kari and Knut; Mr. and Mrs. Jens Hanson; (Kjelden) and two children, Guri and Hans; Nels Bjorgen; Peder Rogness and Anders Rogness; and Hans Digre, all from Houston county, Minnesota; Mr. and Mrs. Ole Fjeseth and one child, Anna; Mr. and Mrs. Peder Kosberg and daughter, Beret; and Nels Winsness, from Allamakee county, Iowa; Mr. and Mrs. Nels Trooien and son Cornelius; Mr. and Mrs. Ole Bogen; Mr. and Mrs. Nels Bogen; Mr. and Mrs. Ole Trooien and daughter, Kirsti; and Kari Trooien, from Winneshiek county, Iowa.

Of this group of 31 persons, the first to arrive in this country were Ole Bogen, and the Jens Hanson and John Knutson families, who emigrated from Norway in 1867. Anders Rogness, Mr. and Mrs. Ole Trooien, Nels Winsness and Hans Digre came to America in 1869. Hanson and Knutson had acquired small farms in Houston county, which they sold before starting on the journey to Dakota Territory.

The two months' journey of several hundred miles toward the western frontier was started on May 15, 1873, and ended July 14, when the group arrived at Lake Hendricks, in what is now Brookings county, South Dakota. Throughout the perilous trip the one ultimate goal that spurred them on was the desire to obtain free land on which they could build homes for themselves and their children.

Eleven canvas hooded wagons, commonly called "prairie schooners," were included in the caravan after the two groups joined. These were so constructed that the families slept in them at night. During the day the travelers were shielded by the canvas roofs from the rays of the sun and likewise from rain and wind. Both ends of the wagons were covered by canvas flaps that could be opened and closed at will.

The travelers rode in the wagons most of the time. At first it was necessary for some of them to follow at the rear in order to drive their little flock of thirty cattle with them, but as time went on this was no longer needed. The cattle then followed the wagons closely of their own accord, and as they proceeded farther and farther into the wilderness the animals could scarcely be induced to leave the vehicles at all. The ox teams that were hitched to the wagons were trained so that they responded to the commands of the driver seated in the wagon.

Numerous adventures, hardships and perils befell the immigrants on the journey. One of the obstacles that beset their way was caused by heavy rains that fell during that summer. Small creeks were found swollen into raging torrents and rivers were overflowing their banks. Only twice were these spanned by bridges

The route they traveled followed approximately the course of the present Minnesota state highway No. 9, leading through the territory where the towns of Austin, Albert Lea, Wells, Winnebago, Jackson, Worthington and Luverne are situated today. From Luverne their trail northwestward into the promised land of Dakota Territory, until they reached the present site of Dell Rapids, South Dakota, where they made their first halt in quest of favorable homesteads.

For many in this band of pioneers the weary journey of 1873 was a honeymoon trip. Several men in the group were leading their brides across the wilderness trails into frontier that was to afford them their first home.

Among these men was Nels Trooien, whose bride, Gjertrud, had come from Norway the preceding spring to join her betrothed in the new world. Nels and Kari Bogen had been married in Iowa but a short time before their pilgrimage to Dakota. Two young couples, Ole and Anne Bogen, and Ole and Guri Trooien had by a coincidence been married on the same day, the former two in Iowa, March 30, 1869, and the Trooiens in Norway. The latter couple left their homeland to seek their new home on the prairies of the west two weeks after their wedding day April 12, 1869.

Anne and Kari Bogen both had come to America to join their future husbands here, as the latter preceded them to this country. At the time Gjertrud Trooien came to America she was accompanied by Kari Trooien, the young sister of Nels and Ole Trooien. Shortly after her arrival here she met Hans Digre. These two were members of the expedition to Dakota in 1873, and two years later they were married in the first wedding to be celebrated in the section of Dakota Territory in which they settled. Cornelius Trooien, the 11 year-old son of Nels Trooien by a former marriage, accompanied Gjertrud and Kari to this country from Norway.

The first Sunday on the journey was spent by the immigrants at a place a short distance east of Austin, Minnesota. In passing it might be mentioned that these pioneers were thoroughly religious, a result of the deep religious sentiment that was common among the masses of their home communities in Norway.

Every Sunday it was customary for the members of the group to gather about their camp at some hour in the forenoon. Seated together there on the ground, or on wagon poles, they had a short religious service. They would sing some hymns, one would lead in prayer and read the day's text, according to Lutheran custom, and then they would close the service by singing another hymn.

Along in the afternoon of the Sunday spent at Austin a stranger on horseback came riding up to the group of immigrants. He offered a team of oxen for sale. They were huge creatures, but gentle and obedient. John Knutson purchased the animals for one hundred dollars.

This team proved of great value on the journey, as they were powerful brutes. Because of their strength they were used regularly to pull the wagons onto dry land after these become mired in the mud and flooded streams that blocked the caravan's passage.

Ox teams often had difficulty in drawing the wagons across boggy land, as they became mired themselves. It even happened frequently that the cattle following the wagons were unable to cross ground that had been turned into treacherous bogs by the incessant rains of the year.

Among the incidents of the journey that still remain fresh in the minds of those of the party still living, was a runaway that occurred on the trail between Austin and Albert Lea.

The caravan had just crossed a railway track, when a train thundered past. Hitched to Ole Trooien's wagon were two teams of young oxen that he had bought shortly before the journey began. These took fright when they heard the train, and galloped away across a slough, splashing mud and water high into

the air in their headlong flight.

Seated on an immigrant chest near the front of the wagon was Guri Trooien with her little baby, Kirsti, in her lap. The husband was walking beside the wagon when the oxen bolted, and was left behind. The young woman clung to her baby with one hand and managed to hang on to the big chest beneath her.

Across the slough was a steep uphill stretch of land, covered by trees. The runaways dashed into the grove, but the uphill running soon did what Ole's "whoas" had failed to do. The team stopped from exhaustion, gasped a moment for breath, and then calmly began to munch the grass beneath them as if nothing had happened.

A rather pale and frightened young woman climbed down from the wagon to wait for her husband to arrive on the scene.

The two teams owned by Trooien was the only two-team outfit in the caravan. They were driven with two animals immediately in front of the wagon, and the other pair hitched in the lead.

Traveling in a northwesterly direction from Albert Lea, the group passed through Wells, Minnesota. Ole Bogen's wagon became mired in the main street of that village, and several ox teams were required to pull the vehicle out of the mud.

From Wells the trail led westward to the Blue Earth river. There the members of the party received their first ride on a ferry boat, as there was no bridge on which to cross the stream.

The man who operated the ferry charged the immigrants fifty cents for each wagon to haul it across. He had to make a number of trips back and forth across the river, as he could take only one wagon and a few head of cattle at a time.

West of Winnebago higher land was reached, and the party proceeded without further difficulties until they reached Jackson, Minnesota.

At the latter place the immigrants were given their first sight of one of the greatest plagues that beset the western prairie frontiers during that part of the century. Grasshoppers had devastated the region. Everything that had been green was gone as a result of the visit from that pest.

The swarm of grasshoppers made a noise similar to that of a swarm of bees, only immensely greater in volume. As they swarmed through the air above the pioneers' heads, the sun was partly hidden from sight as if thunderclouds should have been passing over. The buzzing noise of their flight increased in volume as the insects lifted themselves in a body from the earth. As they flew higher and higher into the air the sound gradually lessened, until at length it could be heard only as a distant rumbling, like the beginning murmurs of thunder emerging from a storm that is just appearing on the distant horizon. Thus this scourge of the prairies left the scene of their devastation and vanished in an ominous cloud far up in the atmosphere as they wandered on, to settle again suddenly on the growing crops of some other toiling pioneer, reducing his profits of the year to little or nothing, and almost crushing the hopes and ambitions that spurred him on in his task of transforming the frontier lands into profitable farms.

The prairie became still better for traveling after the caravan left Jackson, until they reached a creek

about twenty miles west of that village. The water in this stream was wildly over its banks, forming a wide stream that would be difficult to cross. There had been several days of rain preceding their arrival at the place, and the stream was several rods outside of its banks on both sides.

There was a sod hut a short distance from where the party halted. Ole Trooien and another of the men in the group went to this hut to make inquiries as to whether any bridge could be found on which they could cross the stream.

The man who lived there gave the information that he believed there was a bridge about twenty miles farther north, but that all others had been washed away by the flood. One had been hurled down the stream by the water an hour previously.

The farmer, however, went with the party to show them a place nearby where the bottom of the stream was such that it was possible to get across the stream there. In order to get across, the immigrants had to drive their ox teams across the water first, leaving the wagons behind, because they were afraid that if the oxen should attempt to pull a load as they waded across the stream, their exertions might cause them to break through the ground at the bottom with their feet and become mired.

It developed that there was no danger that the oxen might sink into the mud, however, as the water was so deep that only the huge team that John Knutson had purchased in Austin could wade across. The others were forced to swim.

After the oxen had safely crossed the stream, long chains were fastened together and laid so as to reach from one side of the water to the other. Three men were required to carry this chain across the creek. They were Ole Trooien, Peder Kosberg and Anders Rogness. This does not necessarily imply that these men were the strongest in the group, but simply that they were long-legged enough to allow them to cross the stream with their heads reaching above water. One end of this chain was fastened to the oxen's yokes, and the other to a wagon on the opposite edge of the water. Thus the animals were enabled to pull the wagons while they had dry footing for themselves.

Hans Digre's wagon was the first to be pulled across, as his vehicle was lightly loaded. Everything went well until he reached midstream when the force of the current threw the box from his wagon truck. Quick as flash Hans' arm shot out and gripped the bolster ring of the wagon. With his body holding the box from floating downstream and determinedly clutching the bolster with his hands, Hans was pulled safely across, sailing to land with tightly clenched jaws and a grip on the bolster that did not weaken before man and wagon were in a safe port.

The other wagons were pulled across without mishap, as they were more heavily loaded, although the water reached over the wagon boxes on each vehicle. Two or three teams of oxen were hitched to the chains each time, in order to pull the wagons across the water.

Two little boys, Cornelius Trooien and Peder Knutson, were set to drive the herd of cattle across the stream. Just as the last wagon was pulled out into the water, Peder caught it and climbed aboard, but Cornelius was too late. He followed at the rear of the wagon as far as he could go without letting the water reach over his head.

As he couldn't swim he stood for a moment helpless. Just then a heifer came swimming past. An idea

flashed into the boy's mind. He reached out his left hand and grasped the heifer's tail. Clinging to this as the animal swam, he crossed the stream and arrived on the opposite bank before the wagon with Peder aboard reached it.

None the worse for their adventure, all members of the party gathered safely on the other side of the stream. No one suffered anything but fright, although the women still living who crossed that stream in such a manner, themselves admit that it was only with great tremulousness that they maintained their places in the wagons as they plunged into the water.

The party was forced to camp for two days on the West bank of that stream, in order to dry everything they had with them. All their belongings were kept in the wagons and these had been thoroughly soaked by the water through which they had passed in crossing the stream.

No further incidents of special interest on that journey occurred for a time. The oxen plodded steadily westward, while the immigrants alternately walked beside the wagons or sat idly for hours within the canvas covers of their "prairie schooners." Thus they passed through Worthington and Luverne, Minnesota. At the latter place the only beginnings of the prosperous town of today was then one little trading post.

Between Luverne, Minnesota, and Dell Rapids, South Dakota, the caravan encountered a stretch of somewhat rocky and rough ground. While driving over this part of the trail, Ole Trooien had the misfortune to break the rear axle of his wagon. They were then a day's journey east of Dell Rapids. No nearer trading post was to be found, and even at that place the chances that wagon repairs could be found were slight. The party was in a serious predicament.

These pioneers were not helpless in the face of obstacles, however, and they immediately cast their eyes about in search of a way out of their predicament. Some distance away could be seen a small thicket of trees. A number of the men in the party went to this thicket. There they found an oak tree, out of which they fashioned with their axes a sort of axle. One end of this oak was rounded out and slipped through the hub of the wheel on the side of the wagon on which the old axle had been broken off. A wooden pin was thrust through a hole bored through the tree on the outside of the wheel to prevent its falling off. The other end of the oak, which reached partway across the width of the wagon, was firmly tied to the whole part of the old axle with chains. With this contrivance the wagon was in condition for traveling again, and the party continued on its way toward the northwest until the town of Dell Rapids, on the Big Sioux river, was reached.

Several days were spent there by the group, and during this time Ole Trooien and Anders Rogness walked on foot to Sioux Falls, twenty miles farther south. There they procured material for a new axle, which the two men carried on their shoulders back to camp. The new axle was made by John Knutson.

While this was being done the rest of the party explored the surrounding country, on both sides of the river, in quest of possible locations for establishing a colony. They made investigations on both sides of the river, but they were not satisfied with the land. One thing that caused their disapproval was the appearance of huge granite cliffs along the banks of the river. This caused them to fear that the ground was stony, and possibly underlaid at a shallow depth by granite. With the prairies stretching out before them to the northwest at seemingly unlimited distances, where any homesteads could be theirs as a gift from the federal government simply for the occupation of it, they had little desire to take any chances

on getting rocky land.

Another reason for their dislike of the Dell Rapids country was the fact that enough of the land there was already taken so that the immigrants could not easily have found adjoining homesteads. They were anxious to be able to settle close together.

Chapter II

THE camp occupied by the party at Dell Rapids was located on the east side of the Big Sioux river, about on the precise spot where the bridge on the Dell Rapids-Sioux Falls highway now spans the river, on the southern edge of the present town. On the west side of the river there was then a small store, which the members of the expedition visited occasionally. The owner of the store had a boat which the immigrants were permitted to use at will, in crossing the river.

While at Dell Rapids, the party learned of a small settlement at Medary, near Lake Campbell, in Brookings county, Dakota, about thirty miles farther toward the northwest. As their disapproval of the Dell Rapids region increased they decided to make investigations about Lake Campbell.

Before the group started on their long journey some of them had had a little correspondence with acquaintances who had previously settled in Union county, in the extreme southern part of Dakota territory, and as they traveled westward they entertained some thoughts that they might possibly turn southward in quest of land in that part of the territory. The reports concerning the nature of the land farther north, however, caused their interest to center on that.

A further reason for deciding against going to Union county was the fact that other members of the expedition were acquainted with Peder Refseth, a settler in Lac Qui Parle county, Minnesota, near where the present town of Dawson, Minnesota, is located. Reports concerning the land there were also very favorable, and they thought that in case they did not find the land farther north in Dakota territory to their liking, they could simply turn slightly toward the east again and thus reach Lac Qui Parle county. Thus they would have an opportunity to explore more of Dakota territory before securing homesteads, with certain assurance that they would finally find good land in Lac Qui Parle county, should they find nothing appealing to them in Dakota territory before getting that far north, whereas if they went to Union county they would not have the opportunity of making investigations farther into the frontier.

Four men started out ahead of the caravan from Dell Rapids as scouts, traveling afoot. They left on separate days, walking in couples, two leaving for the north on one day and the others on the following day. They met again at the little settlement at Medary. After a short stop there they started back to rejoin the caravan, and they met this at Flandreau, a government trading post on the Big Sioux river, about twenty miles northeast of Dell Rapids.

The caravan traveled northward from Dell Rapids on the east side of the river, until they reached Flandreau. At the latter place there was then nothing but the single little building which the federal government maintained as a trading center for the Indians who made their homes along the river in that part of the territory.

At Flandreau the immigrants' camp was visited by a large band of Indians, whose amazement at their first sight of so many "prairie schooners" in one group was evident. They hung about the camp until evening, when the women of the party began to milk the cows that followed the caravan.

This was almost too much for the Indians. Expressions of amazement appeared on their faces almost as if they were seeing something supernatural as they saw the women squirting the streams of milk from the cows' udders into the pails.

Amazement turned to glee, however, when the women procured cups and gave the Indians milk to drink. The beverage seemed to be highly appetizing to them. The Indians were frankly curious concerning things the immigrants had, and followed them to see everything. They were eager to trade, and offered articles in exchange for flour, utensils and almost everything the white travelers possessed. Anne Bogen purchased a pair of moccasins from them, and Guri Knutson, John's wife, acquired an Indian shawl.

The Flandreau Indians were extremely friendly, especially after they had been treated to drinks of milk. They showed the immigrants a good place to cross the river, as there was no bridge, and as the caravan proceeded on its way toward Lake Campbell the natives all stood on the opposite side of the river and raised their hands as a token of farewell. Thus they stood until the party disappeared from view into the vast prairies toward the northwest.

The Party followed the south side of the river until they reached the north edge of Lake Campbell. The members of the expedition all seemed pleased with the country there, and each one picked out a quarter section of land as a prospective homestead'. There were a few settlers there previously, and they eagerly urged the new party to locate in their neighborhood.

A group of men from the caravan, among them Ole Trooien, Ole Bogen, Ole Fjeseth and Peder Kosberg left shortly after their arrival at Lake Campbell, to buy supplies at Marshall, Minnesota. Food supplies and other necessities, including three plows for breaking sod, were needed and so these men drove the distance of about sixty or seventy miles to Marshall with wagons and ox teams to procure these articles. They were absent about a week.

After their departure the remaining members of the party busily engaged in making a permanent camp. A well was dug at a place about two miles southwest of the Sioux river, and in that vicinity the group expected to locate their future homes.

One of their first tasks was to find the stakes that had been driven into the ground by government surveyors as corner-marks of the quarter sections of land that had been measured out as homesteads. This was not an easy project, as the prairie grass at that time of the year was about knee high, and the stakes were completely hidden from view.

The inventiveness of these pioneers again came to the rescue. Peder Rogness had a small compass. A contrivance for sighting with was constructed, and the compass placed on it. After practicing with this for a time he learned to find the directions of straight lines to the extent that the implement became of great help in locating the corner stakes. After these had been located large blocks made from trees found by the river's edge were placed beside each stake, so that they easily could be found again.

In the meantime the men who had gone to Marshall had obtained the necessary supplies and were returning to Lake Campbell. On their return journey they made camp for the night at Lake Shokoatan, Minnesota, near the Dakota border line. While they were there a hunter visited them.

When he learned that they were seeking homestead land he said, "Friends, before you return to Medary stop here a day or two and take a trip to Lake Hendricks, a few miles northwest of here. I have been hunting wild animals in Deuel and Brookings county, Dakota, for twenty years, but I have seen no

other land that I have liked as well as that around that lake. I don't think you will be sorry for having investigated that region."

Ole Trooien and Peder Kosberg followed his advice, and leaving the rest of the men with the oxen and wagons at Lake Shokoatan they set out afoot to see the country described by the hunter. They were the first of the immigrant party to set foot on the shores of the lake about which these pioneers were to found one of the first colonies in that section of Dakota territory, and about which were to be located their own and their descendants' homes. This was on July 6 and 7, 1873.

They spent two days on their exploring tour, and during this time they traversed the region around Lake Hendricks and crossed the intervening distance of about three miles to Oak Lake, in a northwesterly direction from the former body of water. They spent their first night in that locality somewhere on the shore of Oak Lake. Just where they slept that night cannot be definitely ascertained, but it is believed that they stayed with a squatter, John Day, whose hut was located in a thicket of trees on the west shore of the lake.

The words of the hunter were found to be true. The region about these two lakes appealed to their fancy more than any other land they had seen on their long journey through the wilderness.

When they returned to the camp at Medary and told what they had experienced a council was held. To begin with there was a little difference of opinion. Some wished to settle at Medary, as they had begun making preparations for doing. Others wished to break camp again and go to Lake Hendricks. They finally decided to stay together, however, and so the journey into the unknown frontier began again, this time with a definite destination in mind.

The group left Medary July 11, driving for a time on the north edge of the Big Sioux river, and then northward toward Lake Shokoatan. They made camp there July 13, the last Sunday they spent on the weary trek across the prairies, and on Monday, July 14, 1873, they reached the shore of Lake Hendricks, about on the spot where the town of Hendricks, Minnesota, is located today.

After two months of ceaseless wandering across the vast prairies, the immigrants finally ended their historic journey. Hundreds of miles had been traversed by the home-seekers. They had found their way into the promised land, steering their course at times by the directions of the sun and stars, at other times following the course of faintly visible trails that went winding about the prairie between the sparsely located little settlements.

They had passed the last outpost of civilization on this frontier and had traveled beyond the ends of all trails leading into that country. They were isolated by miles of uncharted prairie land from any settlement known to them. They were alone in a new country, but the land was to be theirs for the taking and they had within grasp the opportunity to build what they had traveled thousands of miles from their native land to find, a home.

Following their arrival at Lake Hendricks, their first interest was to investigate the land for favorable homestead sites. They moved a little farther west along the north shore of the lake, and thus got into Dakota territory, as their desire had been ever since they started out on their long journey.

Each man in the party located a piece of land for his home. There on the desolate shores of Lake

Hendricks they paid no attention to directions or surveyor's measures. They were alone on a vast frontier, with apparently no one to care what land they claimed for their own, or anyone who might question their rights of ownership to whatever ground they had selected on which to build their homes. Few of them, if any, had any idea that there would ever be any other settlers coming to claim land there. The prairie stretched out in every direction in such seemingly limitless expanse that any vision of the thickly populated farming region that was to spring up about them in the course of the next quarter century probably never occurred to any of these pioneer immigrants as they staked out their claims following their arrival at the lake in 1873.

The lake shore, with its easy access to water and wood, was coveted by all, and such was the community-like spirit of these pioneers that each one measured out for himself a piece of land shaped in such a manner that all would be able to touch the edge of the lake with their farms. Thus the homesteads they staked out for themselves were long, narrow strips of land abutting the lake on one end and stretching out into the prairie for nearly a mile at the other extremity.

Later in the fall, Ole and Nels Bogen made the discovery that the land they had selected for themselves was located on the Minnesota side of the state line. This was a rather unpleasant discovery, as every one of the settlers had gotten it into their heads that they wanted to live in the territory of Dakota. After some deliberation, they decided to pull up their stakes and seek other homesteads. As the best land to be obtained on the Dakota side of the lake had then been staked out by the other immigrants, they moved to the east shore of Oak Lake, about three miles west of the other colonists. There they prepared to spend the winter on the sloping hillsides that faced the lake.

After the homesteads had been staked out, the next step to be taken by the colonists was to break a few small plots of ground so that they might be ready to plant their crops in the spring. They also cut and stacked enough hay to feed their cattle and oxen through the first winter in their new homes. This did not require much time, as the rich prairie grass was plentiful everywhere.

During the first summer they made their homes in the canvas covered wagons in which they had made the journey to the new locality. They lifted the wagon boxes with their canvas hoods from the wagon trucks and laid them on the ground, as the trucks were needed for hauling hay, logs for building material, and different work about the colony.

The first task in the preparation for housing the families and cattle over the coming winter was to build stables out of sod. They were small rude huts, but constructed so as to provide as much warmth as possible for the animals.

Dwellings for the colonists themselves were next constructed. For this purpose hillsides were selected in which small cellars could be excavated, with an opening facing south. Over the opening, walls were built of logs fashioned from trees that grew along the lake shore. A door and a window or two was placed in each log wall.

These cellars furnished the first homes to which the settlers could move after having spent an entire summer with "prairie schooners" as their only living quarters. There was nothing elaborate about these humble dwellings but they furnished protection from the cold and snow. They were the forerunners of the hundreds of modern farm homes that since have been reared above the prairies that these colonies were the first to venture upon.

Before the settlers moved into their cellar homes in the fall of 1873, the little colony had already begun to increase its population. Two babies were born that summer while the colonists still lived in the wagons. They were Gulaug Knutson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Knutson, and Peder Trooien, son of Mr. and Mrs. Nels Trooien.

Later in the fall, three other babies arrived in the colony. They were born in the cellar homes of the settlers. They were all girls, Sofia Kosberg, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Peder Kosberg; Jonetta Hanson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jens Hanson, and Petra, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ole Fjeseth.

In many of the cellars several families lived together during the first winter. They were somewhat crowded quarters, but there was little furniture in any of them, and these colonists were well satisfied in spite of whatever uncomfortable circumstances they encountered. The cellars were their own homes, built on their own land, and for a group of ambitious young men and women whose desire for a home of their own had been great enough to bring them out into the wilderness in the face of great hardships and dangers, and seemingly almost surmountable difficulties, a few privations were mere trifles.

Before the winter set in a trip had to be made to the nearest trading post to purchase food supplies that would last until spring. The nearest town at that time was Marshall, Minnesota. This is located about forty miles east of the settlement, according to the traveled highways of today, but the trail they followed was considerably longer. They were forced to make detours to cross creeks, as there were no bridges, and they followed the course that provided the easiest traveling for the oxen and wagons. It may safely be estimated that the distance to Marshall for them was about sixty miles. On their trip to Marshall that fall a group of men left with ox teams and wagons on Monday morning, and returned to the colony the following Saturday evening.

Later in the fall three of the young bachelors of the colony, Hans Digre, Nels Bjorgen and Nels Winsness departed for the lumber camps at Spring Water, east of St. Paul, Minnesota, to work throughout the winter. Digre and Winsness returned to the colony the following spring, but Bjorgen, who was a half brother of Jens Hanson, never came back except on a visit a number of years later.

He left the other two men in the spring of 1874 and for a number of years he was known to be employed on river boats that plied their trade back and forth on the upper Mississippi. His whereabouts finally were lost to the colonists at Lake Hendricks, and his fate in later years has never been known. It is commonly believed that he died long ago.

Chapter III

TWO pioneer farmers had preceded the colony to Lake Hendricks, and they were found living on the south shore of the lake. Each had a hut in a thicket of trees near the water's edge. They were Bill Trulock and William Shadwell.

The colonists had considerable intercourse with Trulock. He generally brought the mail to them once or twice each month. The nearest post office during the first year in which the settlers lived in their new homes was located at Marsfield, Minnesota.

Bill had discovered an object of great interest to him at Marsfield, so that the journeys to that place for him were pleasure excursions of great anticipation. The following year, 1874, he reaped the fruits of his trips to Mansfield, and another bride was brought to the shores of Lake Hendricks. Together with his wife he established a home on his land south of the lake in which they lived until their deaths.

Trulock had traveled back and forth past the Lake Hendricks region with a band of Sioux Indians for some time previous to his settling there. Numerous incidents of his life with the Indians have been told by the old pioneer. Following his settling at the lake, there was a period of unrest among the savages, when they threatened to go on the warpath.

As he feared a possible outbreak against the whites in the territory, he hid his pony in a dugout on a hillside a short distance from his hut. Should he be threatened by the savages he hoped to be able to reach the dugout and escape on his pony.

At a time not long after the establishment of the Lake Hendricks colony three young brothers arrived in the vicinity of the Trulock and Shadwell homes and settled on homesteads there. They were Jacob, Sivert and James Johnson.

These three men had become acquainted with that region previously, as they had roamed about the prairies in that part western Minnesota for a number of years, trapping and hunting. In the course of their wanderings they had squatted at intervals in huts on the shores of Lake Stay and Lake Shokoatan, Minnesota. When they heard of the establishment of a Norwegian colony at Lake Hendricks they decided to settle in that region.

The Johnson brothers remained there until their deaths, and descendants of Jacob live in the community. A son of Jacob, Joseph Johnson, years later went from the community as a teacher in the employ of the federal government to the Philippine Islands, where he remained for about a decade. He then returned to his home state and now is serving as Brookings county superintendent of schools.

Sivert Johnson, one of the three brothers who settled at Lake Hendricks, later served as a representative in the state legislature, and Jacob served a term as county commissioner from his district.

As mentioned before, the Norwegian immigrants who settled at Lake Hendricks were deeply interested in their spiritual life, and it was their desire to form whatever advantages they could to give them the benefits of a religious organization. Already during their first fall at the lake they were visited by the Rev. Mr. O. O. Sandro, of Luverne, Minnesota, who had recently been ordained to the Lutheran ministry and sent out by the Norwegian synod as a mission worker. The first religious service conducted by an

ordained pastor in the vicinity of Lake Hendricks was held during his visit in 1874, at the cellar home of Jens Hanson, close by the north shore of the lake.

This minister repeated his visit several times and he took a census of the colony. He declared that this census would be accepted as an organization of a congregation. His ministry was of short duration, however, and the proposed congregation came to nothing.

An attempt was then made to establish a congregation independent of any organized church group. This was soon abandoned as the settlers clearly understood that if they were to obtain the regular services of a minister they would have to ally themselves with some particular church organization.

In order to affect this, the colonists were forced to wait for a visit either from Elling Eielson, or from the friends of the Augustana synod in Fillmore county, Minnesota.

Eielson was the first ordained Norwegian Lutheran minister in America He was ordained as such by the Rev. Mr. F. A. Hoffman, a German Lutheran pastor, at Duncan's Grove, twenty miles north of Chicago, Illinois, October 3, 1843. This pioneer pastor worked for years among the Norwegian Lutheran settlements in America and he organized a church group of his own. These later joined the synod to a large extent, although a small body refused to do so and have continued under the title of "Ellinganere."

The colonists at Lake Hendricks wrote to the Rev. Mr. Andreas Wright, of the Augustana synod, in Fillmore county, inviting him to visit the colony. He made an attempt to visit the settlers, but was prevented by snowstorms from getting farther than to Minneota, Minnesota, about fifty miles east of Lake Hendricks. At the same time some of the colonists conducted a correspondence with the Rev. Mr. G. L. Graven, of Eielson's organization, who was serving as a pastor in Union county, Dakota.

Intense cold and fierce blizzards marked the first winter of the settlement at Lake Hendricks Frequent snowstorms occurred, some of which raged for three or more days at a time. At such times the settlers were often buried for two or more days under the huge snow drifts that accumulated over their cellar homes.

When the storm subsided, the first thing the colonists were forced to do was to dig themselves out of the snow and reach the open air. This often was not an easy task. Fortunately the doors of the cellars were so constructed that they swung open inward.

The colonists who were imprisoned in their homes could then open their doors and begin to dig a tunnel through the snowdrift that covered them by shoveling the snow onto the floors of their cellars. After thus reaching the surface they shoveled the snow from the floor again and out into the open air.

Once having reached the surface of the snow, the next thing to do was to find the stable. Sometimes this was completely buried beneath the drifts. At other times the top of it might be barely visible above the snow. To reach the door of the stable another tunnel had to be excavated. Steps were then constructed in the tunnels that led to both the cellar door and the stable door. After these had been completed, doors were laid over the tops of the tunnels, to prevent them from being filled by the next blizzard.

Between the periods of storms during the winter, the men of the colony were busy sawing logs from the timber found along the lake shore, in order that they might have material in the spring with which to

build homes to replace the crude cellars in which they were living. The colonists bought some timber, but a great deal of the necessary material for building was fashioned from trees found in their own vicinity.

John Knutson and Jens Hanson owned a Norwegian handsaw which was used to shape the logs. A contrivance was built for holding the top, and the saw was manipulated according to the old Norwegian method. One man would stand on the top of the tree trunk which was laid on the contrivance made for that purpose. Another man stood underneath. Each would grip a handle at the end of the saw, and thus pull it steadily up and down until the length of the trunk was cut to the thickness desired for building material.

Before the further history of the Lake Hendricks colony is told, it may be of interest that the first summer the colonists lived in the vicinity of the lake brought them two unexpected and pleasant surprises.

One of these arrived in the form of a trapper who rode up to the colony camp on horseback. He introduced himself as John Hanson, a Norwegian squatter, and explained that he was living on a homestead some distance east of Fish Lake, a body of water located northwest of Lake Hendricks. It was an agreeable bit of information to the colonists that there was a man of their own nationality in the vicinity, who already had been in that region for a year or two and thus was somewhat familiar with the country. Hanson spent most of his time trapping and hunting about the territory.

A still greater surprise to the colonists was the discovery during the course of the summer that another colony of Norwegians, similar in size, equipment and purpose to their own, had made their camp at Fish Lake. It developed that this party had decided to settle in that region and that they already were selecting homestead sites.

The Fish Lake colony had arrived there a few days earlier than the Lake Hendricks group reached their final ground. Neither party knew of the others existence that time. The Fish Lake group of immigrants was from Stavanger and Nannestad, Norway, and had come to Dakota from Fillmore county, Minnesota. They had traveled across the prairies in the same fashion as the Lake Hendricks colony, but had laid their route farther north, so that they arrived at the place where they founded their colony from a northerly direction, while the others came from the south, as before described.

It was a great pleasure to the two colonies to discover their nearness to each other, as to have neighbors on that vast prairie was unexpected, as well as the source of a feeling of greater safety and comradeship with people of their own class. The fact that both colonies consisted of persons from the same country in Europe intensified this feeling. Since that time the members of the two parties have lived together as close friends, as their descendants do today.

The Fish Lake colony consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Svend Froiland, one daughter and four sons; Mr. and Mrs. Kristoffer Dokken, and three sons; Mr. and Mrs. Enok Larson, and three daughters; Sivert Bjornlie, a widower, and four sons; Mr. and Mrs. Jens Englestad, and two sons and two daughters; Mr. and Mrs. Thore Hanson, and two daughters and a son; Mr. and Mrs. Ole Hanson; Mr. and Mrs. Lars Fristad; Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Gunderson, and three sons and two daughters; Mr. and Mrs. W. Valberg, and two sons and two daughters; John Hanson, Olavus Hanson, Knut Rasmussen and Halvor Hanson.

Two trips to the nearest town were customarily made every year by the Lake Hendricks colonists during the first period of their settlement, one in the spring, and another in the fall of the year.

These trips occupied several days' time, as travel with ox teams and wagons was slow, and there were no broken trails to follow. The necessary supplies for winter and summer consumption were purchased on these trips.

In the spring of 1874, a few of the men of the colony went to a settlement a few miles south of where Canby, Minnesota, is now located to buy seed wheat and a little oats. This was a distance of about twenty miles. This trip in quest of seed was made by Ole Trooien, Jens Hanson and Cornelius Trooien. They bought the grain from a farmer named Ole and they stayed with him as his guest for three days.

The intention was that these three should have proceeded on from the Fladtland place to Marshall to make purchases for the spring and summer supplies. They started out, but were forced to turn back to the Fladtland place because of a heavy snowstorm which occurred at that time. The excursion to Marshall was abandoned and the men returned to Lake Hendricks.

Spring work was now at hand, and the pioneers began with their few implements to prepare their first fields on the prairies for seeding. A makeshift harrow was constructed from some iron teeth that they had obtained and pieces of wood secured by the lake shore. It was not able to produce much effect on the heavy sod that had been turned up at the first plowing of the soil, but it was the best the settlers had and it had to serve the purpose.

Following the completion of the spring field work, the colonists began to construct dwelling houses with the logs they had prepared during the winter. One day as they were busy at this work, two men came driving into the colony from Lake Benton, Minnesota. They created considerable interest in the colony, not only because they were two of the very few visitors that ever came to the settlement, but because they came in a buggy, drawn by two beautiful bay horses. Such a traveling rig on the prairies in those days was a novel sight.

The news these men brought came as a shock to the settlers. They were told that the land on which they had settled was railroad land, and not open for homesteads. In spite of unpleasant news this information afforded, the colonists were undaunted. They were a naturally optimistic and group of men and women, and reverses seemed only to spur them on to greater efforts.

CHAPTER IV

ANOTHER search for favorable homestead land commenced. Ole and Nels Bogen were fortunate in that they moved to the shore of Oak Lake the preceding fall. They were outside the holding of the railway company and were permitted to retain the land they had selected for themselves. Ole Fjeseth was also outside of the limits of the railway land and retained his home, although he had to move the corner marks of his land as he discovered that the he had selected was not all located in the same section of land, according to government survey.

The other settlers now selected quarter sections of land to the north and west of Lake Hendricks, to which they formally filed their rights as homesteaders, and on which they built new homes of the logs stored during the winter at the lake shore. On the farms they then selected, the pioneers retained their homes through the ensuing years, most of them until death, and their descendants still occupy them.

In June, 1874, another visit was paid the colony by a Lutheran pastor. This visit was the result of letters written by the pioneers the preceding fall and winter, and was made by the Rev. Mr. Graven and A. O. Utheim, a layman from Union county. They traveled more than one hundred miles across the trackless prairies to reach the settlement, driving a wagon drawn by horses.

The two men were on the verge of having to spend the night in the valley south of Oak Lake, as it was getting dark when they came that far, and no colonists' huts were visible. Fortunately they were spared this hardship by the sound of a dog's barking and the tinkle of a cowbell at the home of Ole Bogen. The two travelers found that place, where they spent the night.

Rev. Mr. Graven's first religious service near Lake Hendricks was held at the home of John Knutson. Together with the two visitors, the agitation for the organization of a church started again, but there was enough difference opinion among the colonists as to what church group they join to prevent any local organization from beginning yet.

Following the visit of these men, the attention of the settlers returned to their farms. More prairie was plowed, and hay was gathered for the coming year. During the summer considerable prairie sod was broken with plows drawn by four oxen each.

Later in the summer some of the men left the colony to obtain work in the harvest fields of older settlements. Nels Trooien and Ole Bogen obtained work in Lac Qui Parle county, Minnesota, and some time later Ole Fjeseth went to work with a farmer near the Minnesota river in Yellow Medicine county, Minnesota, and Peter Kosberg and Andes Rogness went to the region of New Ulm, Minnesota, to work.

While these men were absent the remaining colonists were considerably frightened by the reports of raids being conducted farther west by Indians on the war path. The colonists were unprepared for any such emergency, as the dangerous Indian tribes were being held in subjection by soldiers in government forts farther west in the territory, and little thought had been given to such dangers by the settlers who were coming into eastern Dakota. The Indians did not come nearer than about seventy miles to the west of the colony, however, and they were soon driven back by soldiers so that the danger passed.

What little harvest was to be done on the fields of the Lake Hendricks settlers was done by the men

who remained at home. In the fall Kristian Anderson and a Mr. Ellington, who lived near Canby, arrived in the settlement with a threshing machine. The machine was stationed for work at four places in the entire Lake Hendricks and Fish Lake settlement, and the crops were hauled there to be threshed. These places were on the farms of Ole Hanson and Enok Larson, in the Fish Lake colony, and at the John Knutson and Nels Bogen places in the Lake Hendricks group.

In October, 1874, occurred the first wedding to be solemnized in the settlement. It may have been the first wedding in the counties in which the two colonies were established, Brookings and Deuel. Hans Digre and Kari Trooien, both of whom had been with the Lake Hendricks colony throughout its long journey of the previous summer, were the bride and groom.

The wedding came as a result of a visit to the colony by Rev. Mr. Eielson and two laymen, Mr. Udtheim and G. Norbeck, of Union county. Miss Trooien was at that time employed at Marshall, Minnesota, but as soon as Mr. Digre heard there was to be a minister in the settlement for a short he no time in hitching his oxen to a wagon and driving to the Minnesota town to get his betrothed.

A near tragedy occurred on the eve of the wedding. Nels Trooien, a brother of the bride, at whose home the ceremony was to be performed, set out to walk to the home of Ole Trooien, another brother, to invite the latter and his family to the wedding. A heavy snowstorm was raging, and Nels lost his way and wandered about for a considerable time before he found Ole's house. It so happened that although it then already was getting rather late in the evening, Mrs. Ole Trooien was sitting up to do some sewing, and she had a lamp burning. The faintly visible gleam of light from this lamp finally was seen through the storm by Nels, and it led him to the door.

Rev. Mr. Eielson, the first Norwegian Lutheran pastor in America, performed the wedding ceremony, and Udtheim and Norbeck were witnesses. The latter's son, Peter, later served two terms as governor of South Dakota, and is at present serving his second term as a United States senator.

Following the wedding, a meeting was held in another attempt to organize a congregation. This was successful, and October 26, 1874, a permanent Lutheran congregation was established, and a constitution in accordance with the principles of the Norwegian Evangelical Church of America was drafted. At the annual meeting of this church body at Chicago in June, 1876, Singsaas Congregation, as it was called, was formally adopted by the church.

The first voting members of the congregation were Hans Digre, Peder Rogness, Anders I. Rogness, Nels Trooien, Ole Fjeseth, John Knutson, Ole Hanson, H. I. Melby, Thore Hanson, Nels Bogen, Ole Bogen, Ole Trooien, Nels Winsness, Knut Rasmussen, Peder Kosberg, Jens Hanson, Lars Fristad, Svend Froiland, Halvor Hanson, Enok Larson, Nels Engelstad, Sivert Bjornlie, and Jens Engelstad.

Officers for the congregation were elected as follows: Hans Digre, president; Peder Rogness, secretary; Nels Trooien and H. I. Melby, deacons; Svend Froiland, trustee for one, and Enok Larson, trustee for two years.

Discussion as to who should be called as pastor to this new congregation took place after its organization. Upon advice of Rev. Mr. Graven, a call was issued to layman O. Utheim, together with an appeal to the Evangelical Lutheran church to ordain him as a minister. He accepted the call and at the annual meeting of the church in Fillmore county, Minnesota, in 1875, he was ordained to the ministry.

The second winter spent in the new settlement, 1874-1875, was not very cold, and there was less snow than the preceding year. The worst snowstorm of that year occurred on March 15-16. Monday morning, March 15, a nearly fatal misfortune befell the family of Ole Trooien. His little log house caught fire early in the morning and burnt to the ground. The blizzard was then raging with its greatest fury. It was scarcely possible to stand up in the wind that came roaring over the prairies, and the blinding snow obliterated all signs of trails, making it impossible for Ole to bring his family to a neighbor's cabin, even if they could have withstood the cold and snow long enough to have gotten there.

The members of the family were scantily clad, as the fire had started in the upstairs compartment of the cabin, where Mrs. Trooien had stored their clothes on the evening before in preparation for the weekly washing on Monday, and they were unable to save any wearing apparel except what little they happened to have in their downstairs room.

Nothing was saved from the fire, with the exception of a large cook stove that they managed to carry out into the snow and a few light household articles that were thrown out. Mrs. Trooien has later remarked that she did not have enough cloth material left for a dish rag. All their food supplies were destroyed.

Carrying their four year old daughter, Kirsti, and a little baby, Peder, 10 months old, the couple managed to struggle through the storm to the stable. There they found the snow drifts piled so high around the walls that they were unable to open the door. At the rear of the building there was a little hole in the wall that had been made for pitching hay into the stable from the outside. After digging away some snow, Ole finally managed to get that open so that they could crawl through. While he was digging he was forced to set his little girl down into the snowdrift, as his wife was holding the baby. The girl was wrapped in a quilt snatched from the bed before leaving the burning house, however, and she did not suffer from the exposure.

Safely inside the stable, the chief concern of the couple was concerned as to whether they and the children could withstand the intense cold for the stable was a rude building and did not keep out the penetrating blasts of wind and the snow. Ole crawled out through the aperture in the wall several times and looked about to see if there were any signs of the storm abating sufficiently to allow him to reach the home of his brother, Nels, for help. The storm seemed to increase its fury, rather than abate, however.

Meanwhile the cold in the stable was beginning to tell on the occupants. They knew they could not stand it much longer. They finally decided that Ole must make a desperate attempt to find his way through the raging blizzard to Nels' home, about half a mile farther north. There was no sign of a trail for him to follow, and no landmarks could be seen through the blinding snow. It seemed scarcely possible that he could ever reach his destination and come back. But it seemed to be the only hope they had of rescue from death in the cold of the stable.

His wife, Guri Trooien, still plainly remembers the departure of her husband on that morning. As she saw him crawl out through the little hole in the stable wall and waved a last goodbye before closing the door after him, she had little hope that she would ever see him again. Yet she bravely saw him go in the hopes that they might thus possibly bring their children to safety.

The minutes dragged by interminably long as she stayed in the dark stable, trying desperately to keep herself and the two little children from freezing.

Nothing was to be heard but the howling of the wind through the cracks in the walls that reached above the drifts outside, and the stirring of the cattle within. It was pitch dark, as the drifts piled up over the windows. The cold came creeping in and seemed to be clutching with its fingers for her and her babies. Meanwhile her mind was harassed by anxiety for the young husband and father who might even then be lost and freezing in the storm upon the prairie.

Ages seemed to have passed, and the cold was getting more intense. Suddenly her straining ears caught a sound as if of someone scraping on the barn wall. Then the little door in the wall opened and she caught sight of her husband's anxious face peering into the darkness of the stable. His beard was fringed with icicles and snow clung to his eyebrows and clothes. With him were Nels Trooien and their brother-in-law, Hans Digre.

Ole had guessed at the directions from his stable to the home of Nels, and judging his path by the course of the wind, he had walked almost straight to his brother's house. Mr. And Mrs. Hans Digre were then living with Nels Trooien and the three men immediately gathered an abundance of clothing with which to wrap about Guri and the children, and went back to find them. They took with them part of a sleigh, on which they would be able to haul the woman and babies back over the snow to safety.

Before leaving Nels' place they cut a number of branches from some trees that had been hauled home for wood. These they stuck into the snow at regular intervals so that they would be able to find their way back to Nels' home without difficulty. They made the trip back through the dark to Ole's stable as fast as possible, wrapped some coats and blankets about the mother and children, placed them on the sleigh and thus pulled them back to Nels' home.

About three or four hours had elapsed during Ole's absence from the stable to get help. Save for the cold they suffered, no injuries were received by anyone as a result of the incident.

During the months that followed the fire, three families lived in the Nels Trooien home. This home consisted of one single room, fourteen by sixteen feet, and it was occupied by 10 persons, in addition to three beds, a table, a stove, a cupboard and a number of chairs and stools. The persons who made their home there were Hans Digre and his bride, who spent their first winter of wedded life there before they could build their own home on the land they selected; the Ole Trooien family of four members, and Mr. and Mrs. Nels Trooien, with two children.

A little later in the spring the weather became more favorable, and the entire colony joined forces in helping Ole Trooien haul materials with which to build a new home. After the spring field work had been completed a new cabin was built into which they moved: This was built of logs, and it still stands today and is used by the son of this pioneer and his family as part of their dwelling house. The logs have since been covered on the outside with siding, and additions have been built on two sides of the structure.

Considerably more land was plowed by the colonists in the spring of 1875, so that each had fields of from ten to twenty acres. Sufficient crops were thus raised to enable them to sell a little grain in the fall of that year. Good crops of wheat and oats were harvested every season during the early of the colony,

and the settlers added more plowed fields to their acreage every year, so that the settlement steadily progressed.

An event of interest occurred in the summer of 1875, when the colonists plowed a furrow through the prairie from the settlement to Canby, Minnesota, a distance of twenty-five or thirty miles. This was to serve as a guide to the colonists on their trips to the newly established village of Canby, and also to enable travelers to find their way to the colony.

CHAPTER V

THE first indications of the rush of immigrants which was to come in the next few years, were seen in the fall of 1875. Three men from Waterloo Ridge visited the colony and each selected a quarter section of land. The men were J. J. Eggen, Ole Refseth and Lars Fjseth. After selecting the land they wanted they went to Iowa, intending to return the following spring with their families.

Unusually mild weather marked the third winter of the colony in Dakota, 1875-76. Members of the original Lake Hendricks settlement who still are living say that a few days in January, 1876, were as warm as a day in midsummer.

One of the greatest steps forward in the first years of progress experienced in the colony occurred February 21, 1876. A post office, named "Prairie Farm," was established in the colony at the home of Hans Digre, who served as postmaster for many years. During the first year after its establishment there was no mail carrier, but the members of the colony took turns at carrying the mail for the post office from Canby, Minnesota. The trip to Canby and back generally took about one and one half days. Whoever made the trip would carry all outgoing mail from Prairie Farm to Canby, and return to the post-office with mail that had arrived for the colonists. A common stopping place for the ones who carried the mail in those days was at the Friberg Olson farm, seven miles south of Canby, to which the one making the trip could return in the evening of his first day on the trip.

Cornelius Trooien, then 14 years old, experienced an adventure on one of these trips that still remains vivid in his memory. He was walking to Canby alone, when he arrived at a creek that flowed through the valley near the Friberg Olson home. When he came there he discovered that the heavy rain of the preceding night had caused the creek to overflow its banks, and that the bridge was nowhere to be seen, as the water was flowing about four feet above its top.

He returned to the Olson farm and asked Mrs. Olson if there was any place where he could cross the creek. She said she did not know of any, but that a large oak tree which used to stand by the edge of the creek had been blown down by the wind the evening before, and if this should have fallen across the creek it might serve as a bridge.

The boy went to look for the tree, and found it stretched out across the water in such a manner that its top almost reached the opposite bank of the stream. On this he climbed out over the water as far as the trunk of the tree reached. Placing his bag of mail carefully on his back where the water would not reach it, he waded ashore from there, clinging to branches of the treetop that were lying under water so as not to be swept away by the current. The stream still was deep enough after he stepped off the oak tree so that only his head protruded above the water.

Safely across the creek he stopped at a vacant hut partway up a hillside, took off all his clothes and wrung the water out of them. He put them on again and continued on his way to Canby barefooted, leaving his shoes and stockings in the hut.

On his homeward journey toward evening he found his shoes and stockings again and put them on. Then he started across the stream on the oak tree again. While he was crawling along the tree trunk some of the mail began to slip out of the bag that he carried on his back. He attempted to stop the mail from falling out of the bag, but failed to reach it, and the whole contents of the bag fell into the stream. The current swept the mail downstream, but at least some of it was caught in a thicket of willows that grew on the lowlands along the edge of the creek.

After successfully gaining the other side of the stream again he obtained the assistance of Mrs. Olson, and together they constructed a device for fishing what was left of the mail out of the water. The woman took Cornelius into the house and gave him some other clothes to wear while she wrung his out and dried them. She also helped him dry the soaked mail by laying it out on the upstairs floor, where it laid until the following morning. After a good night's sleep the boy was ready to set out for Prairie Farm again.

A regularly established mail route was started the following year from Canby, Minnesota, to Medary, Dakota. In a short time other post offices were established along the route, namely Skjold, in Deuel county, at the home of Jakob Nesheim; Prairie Farm, Sherman and Fountain in Brookings county, in addition to Medary at the end of the route.

Immigration to the new colony started in the spring of 1876, both from Norway and from Waterloo Ridge, Iowa. Mr. and Mrs. Bersvend Lokkesmoe, Ellef Lokkesmoe, Lars J. Moen and Hans Dybdahl, with family, came there directly from Norway.

From Waterloo Ridge came Lars Fjeseth and family; Ole O. Refseth and family; Nels Thoreson and family; Johannes Thoreson and family; Lars Svendsen and family; John Erickson and family; Bersvend Jorgenson and family; Mr. and Mrs. Johannes Larson, Peter Hanson and family; Johannes Viken and family; Ole O. Sommervold and family; Ole Reiten and family; Ole Larson; Anders Singaas and family; A. P. Hinsverk and P. W. Berntson. All of these had come to Waterloo Ridge from Norway. The last two named went to work in lumber camps in the fall of 1876, but returned the following spring.

In 1877, the immigration to the colony continued and new homestead shacks continued to spring up about the settlement. From Norway that year came Ole A. Ronning and family; Peder Digre, with his wife and a little girl, and Kirsti Eid. That same year the following group arrived at Lake Hendricks from Iowa: Kristian Ramlo, John Ramlo, Peder Winsnessmo and family; Knut N. Stover and family; H. A. Hexum and family; Mr. and Mrs. Sivert Erickson; Bore Christianson; Mads Johnson; Martin Johnson; Gulbrand Johnson; Christian Johnson and family.

New fields were being broken on every hand, and the Prairie whose stillness was unbroken four years earlier save by the call of the wild animals and birds and the occasional crack of a hunter's rifle was dotted with ever increasing homes.

Beginnings of an educational system were established October 1, 1877, when Brookings county public

school district No. 4 was organized, with Ole Bogen as chairman; Hans Digre, clerk, and Peder Rogness, treasurer.

Two years later, in 1879, the first school term in the colony was held in a little school house erected about one fourth mile south and a quarter mile west of the Hans Digre home. The first teacher was Burre Lien, son of Hans Lien, a Civil War veteran who had arrived in the colony from Blue Earth county, Minnesota, and taken the homestead formerly abandoned by Nels Bjorgen. Burre had been a student at the normal school in Mankato, Minnesota. At first, two terms of school were taught every year, one of a month's duration during the winter, and another of one month during the summer.

Burre H. Lien later became associated with the "Syd Dakota Ekko," a Norwegian newspaper in Brookings, S. D. In the course of time this establishment was moved by wagon teams to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, where it still continues under the name of "Fremad." Lien entered politics actively after moving to Sioux Falls, serving at one time as mayor of that city, and at another time being a candidate for governor of South Dakota. Toward the latter part of his residence in Sioux Falls he was engaged in real estate business. He finally moved to California, where he died.

Another member of the Hans Lien family later distinguished himself. Jonas Lien, son of Hans, after graduating from the University of Nebraska law school served as chief clerk in the South Dakota legislature until the outbreak of the Spanish-American war, when he enlisted with the South Dakota regiment which was recruited under the command of Col. A. S. Frost immediately after the war had been declared. He was promoted to the rank of adjutant, and serving in that capacity he was killed in a battle at Marilao, Philippine Islands, March 27, 1899.

The summers of 1877 and 1878 brought a scare to the pioneer farmers. These were the "grasshopper years." Swarms of grasshoppers in such numbers that they shaded the sun from view as they passed overhead flew across the colony both summers. The Lake Hendricks colony was unusually fortunate, however, as the great body of insects did not settle to earth in their vicinity, but flew directly across the settlement.

Only once did the grasshoppers threaten to settle on the land of the colonists between Oak Lake and Lake Hendricks, and that was on the farms of Hans Digre, Nels Bogen, Nels and Ole Trooien. The latter happened to look toward the west as the swarm approached across Oak Lake. Viewing them thus against the water, he said the insects appeared like a snowstorm approaching across the lake.

The four men thus threatened managed to drive the swarm up from the ground again by setting fire to the dry grass that was still on the ground from the preceding fall. Thus very little damage was done. The greatest number of grasshoppers passed over the colony in the month of June, 1878.

Considerable snow, with a number of storms, occurred in the winter of 1877-78. The year 1878 witnessed the greatest immigration to the colony from Norway. The first to arrive were Hans Engesmoe, Gjertrude Sandro, John Rogness and family, nine in all, Anders Hinsverk, Ole O. Rogness, Peder Revseth, Mr. and Mrs. Erik Digrehagen, Sigrid Rogness, Peder Lovre, and Esten Bogen.

Two weeks later another company arrived from Norway. This consisted of John Nordlokken and family, Hans Setting, Sari Nordlokken, Kirsti Busethjerdet, Anna Halsen, Gjertrud Reppe, John Kirkvold and family. The same year saw the arrival in the colony of Ingebret Megaard and Peder

Jensen from Iowa, and of Mr. and Mrs. Erik Moe and family from southern Minnesota.

Excellent crops were harvested by the settlers in the summer of 1878. The grain was sold during these first years of the settlement at different places, all of which were at a considerable distance from Lake Hendricks. Flour mills were located at Dell Rapids, Dakota, about 65 miles south of the colony, and at Appleton, Montevideo, Granite Falls and Lyng, Minnesota. Most of the grain was hauled to the latter place, as it was the closest. Even that mill was more than fifty miles away to the southeast.

Flour for home consumption by the settlers was ground at these mills from the wheat raised by the farmers themselves. The men brought their wheat to the mill, waited for the miller to grind it into flour, and then returned with the latter product to his home. The price paid to the miller for having the wheat ground into flour at that time was paid in wheat, and customarily amounted to one seventh of the amount of wheat ground. A number of years after the period now being described a flour mill was established at Canby, Minnesota, by John Swenson, which then became the regular trading place of the settlers at Lake Hendricks.

In the spring of 1879, more immigrants arrived in the colony from Norway. They were Peder Kvernmoen and family, John C. Digre, Peder Gronseth, A. A. Hexum and family, Gjertrud Carlson, Kati Grot, Marit Digre, Anne Digre, Magnhild Digre, Ingeborg Basmoe, Bersvend G. Jilseth, John L. Hexum, Johan Ness, Haldo Hoen, John R. Ramlo, Magli O. Ronning, Marit Engesmo, Ragnhild Haugen, Ellef Reppe, John Godoien and family. Mr. and Mrs. Ole Rogness, Sr., Kristian Refseth and family, Elias Refseth, John Refseth, Mr. and Mrs. Ole Refseth, Kari Tilset, Ingeborg Moen, Hans Moen, Hans Kirkvold, and Peder Erikson.

During that same summer Hans Anderson and family, Eaten Anderson and family, and Kirsti Anderson came to the colony from Blue Earth county, Minnesota, Edward Rasmussen, John Oien and Lars Udseth came from Red Wing, Minnesota, and Johannes Johnson and family came from Wisconsin.

The following spring, 1880, another group came to Lake Hendricks from Norway. They were Ole S. Solem and family, Mr. and Mrs. Sivert Solem, Else O. Haugen, Randi Refsethaas, Svend Moen, Jonetta Moen, Mr. and Mrs. Peder H. Kirkvold, Peder Hagen and family, Kristoffer Hinsverk and family, Ambroses Morseth, Bernt Hanson, Nels Forseth and Marit Digre.

Another immigrant, Thorvold Mathison, arrived at the colony with his family in December of that year. He had left Iowa in June and gone to work on the construction of a railway between Milbank and Aberdeen, Dakota. In the fall, his wife and children came to Aurora, about twenty five miles southwest of Lake Hendricks, so as to be able to join Mr. Mathison when he should return from his work on the railway.

A sad misfortune occurred to this family while they were at Aurora, as a little daughter died from diphtheria. She was buried by railway workers near the railway at the time. Later the father and a son, Mathias, exhumed the body and brought the remains to Lake Hendricks, where they were buried in the cemetery near the site of the present town of Hendricks.

CHAPTER VI

The memories that still remain the clearest in the minds of the early pioneers at Lake Hendricks, the snowstorms and immense volume of snow that fell the winter of 1880-1881 are perhaps the most vivid. The great storm came as early as October 13-14 and the snow never cleared away entirely again until May of the following year. Hardships and sufferings prevailed during these months in the colony.

Caught so unexpectedly early in the fall by the snowstorms, many settlers were poorly prepared for winter. Most of the colonists used all their flour long before spring released them from the snow in which they were virtually imprisoned. They were forced to grind wheat on the little coffee grinders found in their homes. These were made of too soft material for this use, and before spring there were only a few coffee grinders left in the settlement. They had been worn out by grinding wheat.

Such luxuries as coffee and tobacco disappeared from the colony. Every imaginable effort was made to invent a substitute for coffee, but the results often were far from being tasteful. The men dug in their haystacks in search of every possible type of weed that might produce somewhat the right flavor in their pipes, but they were equally unsuccessful.

Shortage of fuel occurred in many homes. The haystacks then were used as sources for fuel. The hay was twisted into hard knots and burned in the stoves. From the last days of January until the last days of April practically all traffic of any kind was stopped by the huge drifts of snow.

When the first storm came in October, the threshing crew was working at the Nels Trooien farm. They threshed all day October 13 in beautiful weather. During the night the beginning of the storm was heard.

When the threshers came out in the morning, a spectacular scene met their vision. A wall of snow from six to ten feet high encircled the house. They climbed to the top of this and looked for the stable. It was nowhere to be seen.

The men began wading through the deep snow in the direction where the stable was located. After a time they noticed the footing became a little firmer. They began to shovel away the snow, and discovered the roof of the stable underneath. By noon they had succeeded in excavating a tunnel down to the stable door.

After eating dinner the men returned to the stable and fed the horses that were cooped up there, twelve in all. Night fell before they had finished the work of opening the stable door and caring for the large number of horses imprisoned within it.

Next day the crew went in search of the threshing machine, as the storm had abated somewhat. Another spectacular scene awaited them. There where the "horsepower" machine had been left, nothing could be seen about the snow except the fish pole that had been used as a driving whip. Looking toward the spot where the grain separator should be, nothing was visible except the "straw carrier" which had been lifted into an upright position by the force of the wind.

One of the members' of the crew remembered plainly where he had left the shovels on the evening

preceding the storm, and after considerable labor they were located. With the help of these more men could be employed about the stable, where the first thing to do was to find the well. After finding it, water had to be carried in pails into the stable. It was impossible to get any of the horses out of there for a week.

The following week the weather was a little more favorable, and two of the threshing crew left for their homes on horseback. The third man in the group remained for two weeks to take care of the remaining horses on the farm.

Fairly nice weather followed the first spell of cold and snow. The threshing crew returned to the Trooien place. Three men were employed an entire day to clear away the snow from the machine and get it into condition for threshing. Six men spent all of the following day in digging a tunnel from the machine to a setting of wheat stacks that stood on somewhat lower ground.

Snow lay between the stacks to the depth of eight or ten feet. At the spot where the horse power was to be located, the snow had to be shoveled away over a wide enough circle for the horses to walk in working the machine.

The snow was then melting, and the ground under the horses' feet became soggy after the threshing started. In order to prevent them from being mired, two extra men had to be employed with the crew, whose duty it was to carry straw with which the ground where the horses walked was covered. It is said that several years' plowing was necessary before the ground on which the horses tramped became usable for growing crops again.

Three settings of four stacks each were threshed at the Nels Trooien home after the storm, and this required a whole week's time. After completing the work, the threshing machine was moved to the Ole Trooien place, half a mile farther south. To move the heavy machine was a difficult task. Tunnels had to be dug through the snow in a number of places.

Quite favorable weather prevailed from this time until Christmas. Much of the snow disappeared, except around the buildings. January, 1881, also brought nice weather, until the latter part the month. Then the snowstorms that made the winter historic began.

The little huts on the prairie were completely covered by the drifts of snow, and at places several feet of it lay on top of the roofs. Tunnels were excavated from the cabin doors to the surface of the snow. In these, steps were constructed by which the people could climb up and down from their thresholds.

These steps were treacherous, as the edges soon became rounded and icy from the walking on them. It was not an infrequent occurrence that a person would suddenly lose his balance at the top of the stairway and shoot with great speed down the incline, force the door open in his headlong flight, and finally come to an abrupt halt on the floor in the center of the room.

Such accidents generally were most common to visitors who were unfamiliar with neighbors' steps. At first such abrupt descent of visitors into the household were somewhat disconcerting to the housewives, but as they became used to receiving callers in that fashion it was a source of considerable amusement. Remarks such as, "Deet err ad felt sea hastier du bar idea ad," often greeted visitors on those occasions.

Tunnels were excavated from the house to the woodpile, from the house to the stable, and from the latter place to the well. One farmer had three empty sugar barrels on his farm. One morning he came out of his house and found all his tunnels filled with snow by the storm that had raged during the night. Becoming disgusted with the hopelessness of trying to keep his tunnels open, he set two of these barrels through the snow above his well, one on top of the other, forming a sort of extension to the top of the well box. A short time later even these were buried under the snow, and so he placed the third barrel on top of the other two. When the snow finally ceased to fall, only eight inches of the third barrel remained above the surface.

Some of the farmers were able to make use of small openings in the roofs of their homes to crawl out upon the snow, thus saving themselves the labor of trying to keep the tunnels to the door open. An immense amount of labor was expended throughout the winter, in order to keep the tunnels open. They would drift in again every few days. By the tramping of people and cattle over the same paths every day these finally became packed and icy to the extent that it eventually was possible by careful walking to make one's way on them between the buildings, the well and the woodpile.

Outside of these pathways it was dangerous to venture, as the snow was so soft and deep that it was impossible to wade through it. The drifts, from eight to ten feet deep everywhere, were like quicksand, sucking the unwary pedestrian or animal into its depths. At one farm a colt was lost as it cut some capers on its way from the stable to the well and slipped off the trodden path. It was found dead under the snow when the spring thaw came months later.

At one farm, the farmer and his little son almost lost their lives in the same manner. They were in the stable busy with the evening's chores until darkness began to fall. When they were ready to return to the house, the twilight and drifting snow made it impossible to see the cabin, and the icy path leading from the stable also was hidden from sight. They wandered off and got out into the soft snow. They struggled desperately to get back to the path, but their floundering only caused them to sink deeper into the snow. Completely exhausted they were finally forced to remain in the drift overnight.

About 11 o'clock the following forenoon, neighbors who had been called to the rescue found the pair four feet under the surface of the snow. Their snowy blanket had kept them from freezing during the night, and they escaped with no more serious consequences than the fright and exhaustion.

A certain spinster who lived in one of the outskirts of the settlement refused to dig tunnels from her house door, "to be knocked unconscious every time she was to go up and down." Instead of the icy steps her neighbors used, she placed an empty barrel up through the snow from her door. Through this she crawled from her threshold to the open air all winter long with great difficulty, as her house lay eight feet beneath the surface.

Humorous incidents occurred during the winter, to offset the gloom. The story is told of a bachelor who lived alone in his little sod hut. One evening he wound up his clock and retired to bed.

During the night he awoke several times but as it was pitch dark in the room he rolled over in his bed and returned to slumbers. Finally he could sleep no longer. Getting up, he struck a match to see what time it was. He was surprised to find that the clock had stopped, as it had never before failed to run its thirty-two hours in a stretch after being wound up.

Hurriedly dressing, he went to the door and looked out. It was broad daylight, and the darkness in his room was caused by the snow that had drifted up over the windows. After going to the stable to feed his oxen and cow, he took his skis that stood beside the door and went to a neighbor's house. The bachelor ordinarily was a humorously inclined gentleman, full of fun and mischief, but the humor disappeared when he reached his neighbor's home and discovered that the latter's calendar was two days ahead of his own. The bachelor had slept continually for two nights and a day.

The long and gloomy winter came to an end after six months' duration. As the warm breezes from the south and the ever lengthening days heralded the coming of spring the pioneers looked out from their snow walled prisons. The courage that had been sinking lower in the breasts of the settlers as the unceasing labor and terrific storms continued month after month, sprang up again as if loosed from its shackles when the drifts began to sink into the earth.

Hope came back to the hearts of the pioneers and the prairie renewed its challenge to its would be conquerors. As the first green blades of grass peeped up from their hiding places in the earth, they held forth again the alluring promise of an untold abundance of prosperity to the one whose grit kept him in the battle with the elements on the prairie until it should be conquered and laid in submission beneath the furrows of the white man's fields. Not one of the pioneers who underwent the ordeal of that terrific winter left the settlement. They all returned to their fields and the breaking of more ground into tillable acres.

CHAPTER VII

Years have passed into decades since the beginning of the Lake Hendricks colony, and its fifty sixth birthday will soon be reached. The hardy veterans of the prairie who first ventured into that wilderness are nearly all sleeping beneath the sod into which they set the first plow.

The region is thickly populated with flourishing farms. Well graded highways spread out in every direction. Luxurious automobiles speed over the ground where the plodding oxen of the pioneers broke the first trail. Overhead an occasional airplane wings its way through the atmosphere that then was undisturbed save by the wild birds of the prairie, and the daily whistle of fast trains resounds where the pioneers heard nothing but the echoes of their own voices and implements mingling with the call of wild birds and animals to break the stillness of the prairie.

Prosperous towns and villages dot the community and the tall grain elevators, speeding freight trains and numerous stockyards tell of the wealth that was hidden in the land into which the immigrants of 1873 ventured.

In speaking of the immediate results of the activity of the original Lake Hendricks colony, the growth of the Singaas Lutheran congregation which they founded must not be forgotten. When Rev. Mr. Udtheim resigned from his post because of failing health, he recommended Rev. Mr. G. Evenson as his successor. The latter served as pastor of the congregation from 1881 to 1887.

Through its president, Hans Digre, the congregation purchased forty acres of land in 1882. On this a parsonage was erected, and during the summer of 1884 a church was built close beside it. From 1887 to 1889, Rev. Mr. O. O. Berg served as temporary pastor of the congregation, following which Rev. Mr. J. L. Nesheim accepted the call. The latter lived until his death in 1916 on a farm he purchased near the church after his resignation from service as pastor in 1895.

From 1895 to 1896, Rev. Mr. Berg served as temporary call pastor again, until Rev. Mr. J. J. Ekse accepted the call to the congregation. He served as pastor until 1926, when he resigned because of advancing age and was succeeded by Rev. Mr. E. Espelien.

During Rev. Mr. Ekse's service, a new church was erected in the village of Hendricks, Minnesota, in 1903. In 1904, a new parsonage was built, and in 1922, a new church was on the site of the old building in the country.

Forty-seven of the young men of the settlement that had grown out of the little Lake Hendricks colony of 1873 served in the United States army during the World War. Thirty-six of these served with the American Expeditionary forces in France. Two died of sickness in France, two were wounded in battle,

and one died in Camp Lewis, Washington.

Of the members of the original colony that settled at Lake Hendricks, five who then were adults, and five of the children who were with the expedition, are still living. The living five are all living on their original homesteads, with the exception of Mrs. Ole Trooien, who moved to the village of Hendricks in 1917 to live there with her granddaughter, Mrs. Anton Digre, who is the daughter of Kirsti, the little girl who was with the Trooiens at the time of the fire that destroyed their home in 1876.

Hans Digre retained his wiry strength and energy to the extent that he continued farming his 200 acres of land alone until the fall of 1928, when he retired at the age of 87 years. Mrs. Nels Trooien lives with two sons and two daughters, Kirsti, Christine, Carl and Ole, on the old homestead. Mr. and Mrs. Ole Fjeseth both are living and reside on the old homestead with the family of their son, Peder. The latter is married to Ingeborg, the daughter of Jens Hanson, another pioneer who came with the colony in 1873. The children of these pioneers who came to Lake Hendricks with the first caravan, and who are still living, are Cornelius Trooien, of Astoria, South Dakota, Hans Hanson and his sister, Guri, now Mrs. Wahl, both of whom live on their own farms in the settlement, Kari Knutson, now Mrs. John Aune, living on a farm near Hendricks, Minnesota, and Beret Kosberg, now Mrs. Ingebert Nordaune, of Bonetrail, North Dakota, who was born on the St. Lawrence river as her parents were immigrating to America.

Other descendants of these early colonists are scattered in large numbers about the settlement, and many have moved to other regions of the country. Appropriate memorials to the pioneers have been arranged. In 1923, the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Lake Hendricks colony, a large celebration was staged on the shore of the lake under the direction of Rev. Mr. Gunnar Froiland, of Dawson, Minnesota, son of the pioneer Svend A. Froiland.

At this celebration a trained team of oxen and a prairie schooner were displayed to hundreds of persons who never before had seen such an outfit, and a little sod hut similar those used by the early pioneers was built near the lake. The same year a stone memorial with granite tablets the names of the first settlers in the colony, was erected at the Singsaas country church.

A conspicuous character at the Lake Hendricks celebration in 1929 was John Hanson, of Hansonville township, Minnesota, who formerly has been mentioned as a solitary hunter and trapper living some distance east of Fish Lake when the colony settled there in 1873. He appeared at the celebration clad in the garb of the hunter of pioneer days, with a brilliantly colored Indian robe thrown over his shoulders.

The latest event staged in memory of the early settlers at Lake Hendricks took place on the Henrik Eggen farm north of Hendricks, June 1-2, 1929. A banquet and celebration were given there to which were invited the survivors and the descendants of the group who had arrived from Norway in 1879, half a century previous. Hundreds of persons attended the celebration. Two sermons were heard at the gathering there on Sunday, June 2, and they were delivered by two brothers, the Rev. Mr. James Gronseth, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the Rev. Mr. Gilbert Gronseth, of Hudson, South Dakota. They are the sons of Peder Gronseth, one of the immigrants of 1879.

Author's Note

Following the publication of this book, the fact came to light that a parochial school was established in the Lake Hendricks colony several years before the first public school term opened in 1879.

The colonists provided funds with which to employ a teacher to give instruction in religion, reading, arithmetic and spelling. Hans Digre, one of the members of the Lake Hendricks colony, was employed in that capacity. He continued as parochial and Sunday school teacher in the settlement for more than thirty years.

As there was no school house in the colony when the parochial school first was established, the pupils gathered with the teacher in farm homes throughout community. Different homes were selected at times, so that no one place should have to furnish room for the school for any great length of time.

The following were added in 2010:



Last Photo taken of those who were on the Trek

The date written on the photograph is in error as Nils Winsness died April 1920 and he is included in this photo.

First Row, l to r:

Mrs. Jens Hanson, Mrs. Nils Trooien, Mrs. Ole Bogen, Mrs. John Knutson,
Mrs. Ole Trooien, Mrs. Ole Fjeseth

Second Row, l to r:

Hans Digre, Mrs. Hans Digre, Mrs. Andrew Rogness, Mrs. Peder Kosberg,
Mrs. Nils Winsness, Nils Winsness

Third Row, l to r:

Jens Hanson, Andrew Rogness, John Knutson, Nils Trooien, Ole Fjeseth

Not pictured: Ole Trooien, Peder Rogness, Mr. and Mrs. Nils Bogen, Ole Bogen,
Peder Kosbert and Nils Bjorgen

**50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST SETTLERS, 1873
AT LAKE HENDRICKS AND FISH LAKE
JULY 4, 1923**



Standing: Nils Engelstad, Andrew Rogness, Gunder Froiland, Berta Engelstad, Mrs. Freberg Olson, Mathilda Gunderson, Julia Walberg, Guri Kosberg, Kari Aune, Guri Wahl, Jonnetta Christianson, Gertrude Trooien, John Hanson

Seated: Ole Thompson, Halvor Hanson, Lars Friestad, Kari Rasmussen, Rakel Froiland, Guri Trooien, Mr. and Mrs. Erick Nesheim, Mr. and Mrs. Hans Digre, Mr. and Mrs. Ole Fjeseth, Mr. and Mrs. Jens Hanson

Seated on ground: Cornelius Trooien, Peter Trooien, John Hanson, Bernard Froiland, Hans Hanson, Anton Anderson, Mr. Johan Melby



**The Singaas Lutheran Church
Hendricks, MN**

**The monument in front of the church is in honor of those
who traveled in the wagon train in 1873**

INDI HAR HERREN HJULPET OS
IN GOD WE TRUST
KNUTSON
JOHN, GURI, PEDER, KNUT, KARI,
GULLAUG
HANSON
JENS, BERET, GURI, HANS,
JONNETA
TROBIEN
NILS, GUERTRUD, CORNELIUS,
PEDER
TROBIEN
OLE, GURI, KJERSTI,
EJSETH
OLE, KJERSTI, ANNA, PETRA
KOSBERG
PEDER, GURI, BERET, SOPHIE
BOGEN
OLE, ANNE
BOGEN
NILS, KARI
PEDER, ROGNES, SANDERS, ROGNES
NILS, WINSNESS, HANS, DIGRE
KARI, TROBIEN, NILS, BJØRGEN

WE WILL SERVE THE LORD
 EBEN-ESER
 FROHND
 SYLINDER, BERTHA ANDREAS
 DUNNAR, BERNHARD, SIKEN,
 LARSEN
 NICH, KAREN, LARIE, GUSTE
 JOSEPHINE, HANNA
 DOKKEN
 CHRISTOPHER, KATERINE, OLE
 CARL, JOHAN
 BJORNIE
 AWART, JULIUS, BERNT,
 OLE, ANTON
 ENGELSTAD
 JENS, MARTHA, NILS, GUSTAF
 MIKALL, THEOLINE
 HANSON
 THOR, KJESTINE, HANNA,
 OLAVA, CARL
 NESHEIM
 JAKOB, INGRID
 HANSON
 DORTHEA, OLE, JOHAN
 FRISTAD
 LARS, ANNE
 GUNDERSON
 JAKOB, MARIE, GINA, BERNT
 JOHAN, KASPER, CAROLINE
 TILLA
 HALVOR, HANSON, JOHN, HANSON
 OLAVUS, HANSON, KNUT, RASMUSSEN