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Kandiyohi County, Minnesota *p. 100-102*

Even Railsen (Glesne), Andrew Railsen (Glesne), Ole Knudsen and E. O. Glesne, all from Sigdal had settled by Norway Lake by 1858 and were thus the first Norwegian settlers in the county. Next after them came Christopher C. Engen from Nordre Land, Erik Kopperud from Hadeland as well as Lars Andersen, Ole Hagen and Sivert Andersen and more. St. Cloud, about 60 miles away, was their nearest marketplace. They began with growing wheat and had just gotten on their feet with buildings farming, when that bloody Indian uprising took place (in 1862).

Ole Hagen, who lived on Section 32, was found dead at the edge of the road, not far from his home. He had filled his wounds with grass in the hope that would stop the blood loss, but it did not help him. The bodies of Berge Bergesen, Fredrik Olsen and Mrs. Olsen were also found near Hagen's home. The same day, 4 Indians came to Lars Andersen's house, where they begged for milk, that he (Andersen himself) carried out to them, but when he went back to the house, he was shot. His son, Endre, on orders from the Indians, went to the garden to dig up some potatoes for them and after that was done, they killed him. His brother, Ole, was shot in the shoulder and fell, seemingly dead, behind the stove. Their sisters, Guri and Brita, the first 17 and the other 8 years, were carried off by the Indians. But the next morning, while the Indians were out looking for their horses, that had broken loose during the night, they had the opportunity to flee. Mrs. Lars Andersen had hidden in the cellar with her 21/2 year old child. From the cellar, she was witness to the extermination of her family. And, thinking they were all dead, she began to lose her composure, but then she found that her son, Ole, mentioned above, came to and she got her courage back. They got hold of a pair of oxen and a sled and drove to Oscar Ericksen's home.

But here also, the Indians had carried out their bloodbath. An unmarried Swede by the name of Carlson, who stayed with the Erickson family, had been killed, Ericksen himself was badly wounded in the abdomen and an American, who also lived there with his family, was similarly badly wounded. The women in the house, themselves, had to take up the combat against the savages after their men had been rendered unfit to fight. They barricaded the doors and windows and shot through cracks and holes with such skill that the redskins found it advisable to withdraw, taking their wounded and one dead. The women noticed, however, that one of their neighbor's houses had been set afire, and since they feared the same fate, they decided to flee with their children while the Indians were distant. Their wounded men, they had to leave where they lay. It was luck, however, that Mrs. Andersen and her son came with a vehicle and she took these men with her to Forest City, where their families had fled ahead of them. The whole settlement was the object of plunder and murder. At Ole Knudsen's a number of refugees had gathered one evening. Knudsen and his wife took a child

each on their shoulder in all haste to Even Railsen's home, but since Railsen and his family had already abandoned their home, Knudsen and his group took refuge on a little island in Norway Lake, that was out of gun range, to which they got with help of a tree trunk that they pushed back and forth until all were brought to safety. There they would resist, if necessary.

Among other Norwegians, who through a narrow squeak, had avoided the redskin's murderous hand, was Thomas Osmundsen and his father-in-law, Svend Borgen, from Nummedal. While they were occupied with moving some furnishings and foodstuffs from Borgen's house, the Indians, who were hiding in ambush, began to shoot at them. But when those on the nearby island heard their cries, they began to raise their voices so loudly that the Indians became frightened and took flight.

Rumours of the unhappy conditions at Norway Lake had, however reached Paynesville, where it did not take long to equip a small army to help their neighbors in the west. Among the first refugees the Paynesville expedition met on their march westward were 5 children belonging to a Johannes Iversen, that the Indians had killed. This group of children had wandered around the prairie, crying and hungry and without a destination. About the same time, Even Olsen, Erik Kopperud and Lars Iversen and their families came to Paynesville and thence others began coming, one caravan after another. The company continued further eastward in the direction of St. Cloud and over time as they flooded forth, the company grew, since no one wished to be the first victim of the redskins, who they believed were on a hunt for the whites.

When the company reached the City of St. Cloud obstacles met them since the ferry was closed and they could not get across the large river that ran through that city. The businessmen and others, who were dependent on the farmers, did not wish to see that the area could be laid waste. But, the aforementioned Thomas Osmundsen was not at a loss as to what to do. He mounted one of his oxen and had it swim over with him - and his example was contagious, both people and livestock quickly got across to the other bank. However, they agreed on seizing the ferry by force, if the police would give way willingly. From the refugee group's leaders people soon got the understanding that they could just as well fight with the citizens of St. Cloud than go back and fight the Indians. The consequence then, was that they got their way. The police did not say a word. The first Norwegian settler in the area of Kingville was Halvor Jørdal of Drangedal parish. He later took part in the Civil War, where he fell. See the section 'Norwegians in American Wars'.

George Johnson, from Gudbrandsdalen, was the first settler in the area of Georgeville.

The first who settled in the neighbourhood of Willmar were Erik Nelson Elgeraas from Sveen parish, Søndhordland. He came from Burnett County, Wisc., and settled in the aforementioned place in 1863, thus after the Indian uprising. Next after him came Olai Olsen from Ranen, Nordland, Ole Aslaksen, Tollef Homen, Halvor Sondresen and Andreas Aslaksen from Vinje, Telemarken. A little later came Helmer Martinsen from Lofoten, Ole L. Elgeraas from Sveen, Søndhordland, Halvor Olsnes from Birie, Telemarken as well as John Oson,

Matias Olsen, Mads Knudsen, Knud Staland, Ellef Ellefsen, Ole Sletten, Thore Lindland, Asbjørn Pedersen, Tore Feiring, Ole Torkelsen, Jacob Jacobsen and Anders Christiansen, who all settled near Willmar.

About this time also, the settlers who had to flee the Norway Lake district during the Indian uprising, began to return to their homes. A few others also settled there now, namely, Martin Engen, Johan Haavelsen and Erik Negaard, all from Nordre Land, Elling Sagadalen and Erik Ruud from Hallingdal, Anders Skare, John Hamre and Erik Kvenrud from Eggedal, Iver K. Syse from Hardanger, Jacob Ramstad from Sigdal and Lars Næs from Sogndal. Toløre Torgersen from Telemarken was the first to settle at Kandiyohi Station. And the first in the area of Irving were B. C. Bensen from Helgeland, Ole C. Christensen from Næsne, Nordland as well as N. Emeson and Størk Larson. This settlement was called Nordland because it was founded by Nordlændinger (1866). It lies in the northeast part of Kandiyohi County and the northwest part of the adjacent part of Meeker County.

Norway Lake congregation, that was founded in 1866, was the first Norwegian congregation in the county. Pastor Th. Johnson, of the Norwegian Synod was its first serving priest. Its church was built in 1868. Now there are 19 Norwegian congregations in and 16 churches in the county, 6 of the congregations belong to The Lutheran Free Church, 5 to The United Church and 5 to The Norwegian Synod, 2 to Hauge's Synod and 1 to the 'Free-Free'.

The first Norwegian to hold an official position was the Nummedaling, C. G. Lien was elected County Treasurer in 1867. (The northern half of the present Kandiyohi County was then called Magnolia County and it was here he was the Treasurer.)

Andrew Railson of Norway Lake was the first Norwegian who represented the county in the State Legislature (elected 1867).

Willmar Seminary, a Norwegian school was founded in 1882. Recently a school was established at Norway Lake, mainly for Norwegian children. The Free Church's childrens home was moved from Lamberton to Willmar, Kandiyohi County this year (1905). For more information on these establishments, see their respective sections, later in the book.

Places with Norwegian names: Arctander, Aspeliën, Dovre, Hawick (Havig), Holum, Grue, Negord (Negaard), Norway Lake and Thorpe.

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