

Translated from 'Nordmændene i Amerika' by Martin Ulvestad
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Trail County, North Dakota p. 174-175

The first Norwegians in Trail County were Ole Thompson, Torger Thompson, Halvor Bentrud and Ole Rust, all from Hallingdal, as well as Christian and Carl Larsen from Solør. They came from Mitchell County, Iowa and settled in the area of Caledonia, by the Red River in 1871. Next after them came H. Klep from Sætersdalen, K. Rust and A. Arnesen from Hallingdal, K. Vinge, P. Smith and H. Hovland from Stavanger, Jens Mikkelsen with O. and E. Floberg from Østedalen, the brothers Rognlie from Trondhjem, Engebret Larsen from Hadeland, P. Herbrandsen, Knut Rauk, J. Ingvaldsen and S. K. Knutsen, all from Hallingdal, John Ødegaard, Christian Ødegaard, Ole Bredesen, Arne P. Haugen and Hans Pedersen, all from Solør, G. B. Jacobsen and Jacob Fevold from Stavanger, Thor Hovet, Knut Hovet, Ole Rønnestad and Ole Jari (likely Jahr) from Sætersdalen, John Lerum, Erik Thon, Martin Johnson and Andrew Johnson from Valdres and many more who spread out over a large area.

They began growing wheat and barley. In the beginning they had to take their harvest to Alexandria, Minn., almost 200 miles! - with oxen! But it was not long before they did not have to drive further than to Fargo, 70-80 miles. And now in later times, they can deliver their produce at the barn door, so to say. Townships with Norwegian names in Trail County: Norman and Norway. One could have expected more Norwegian place names in a county so rich in Norwegians.

According to the collection 'Norge i Amerika' there were in 1900, 24 Norwegian congregations and 21 churches in this county, 9 belonging to The Norwegian Synod, 4 to The United Church, 4 to Hauge's Synod, 3 to The Lutheran Free Church, 2 to the Baptist Church and 2 to the Methodists. For information about the Norwegian Hospital in Hillsboro and the Bruflat Academy in Portland, see the section, 'Charitable Institutions' and 'Teaching Institutions'.

Peter Engebretsen, who was elected County Treasurer in 1874, was the first Norwegian county official here.

Knute Nomland was Trail County's first legislator, when he was the Representative in the Dakota Territory Legislature (in Yankton) in 1881. Later (in 1893) he was elected State Treasurer.

John Flittie, whose home was in Mayville, Trail County at the time but who died in Williston, N. D., held a seat in the Dakota Territory Senate in 1884. In other words, he was North Dakota's first Norwegian-born Senator. He was also the first Norwegian to hold a State official position, when he was elected State Secretary in 1889.

For information on Trail County newspapers, 'Dakota-Bladet', 'Folkets Røst', 'Afholds-Basunen', 'Banneret', 'Landmanden', 'Folkets Avis', 'Statstidende' and 'Fremtiden', see the section, 'Norwegian-American Newspapers and Periodicals.'

* A number of the old settlers from the area of Hatton held their first reunion in 1903. Present were Ole Benson, Tosten Tufte, Abraham Nilsen, Østen Pladsen, Lewis Thompson, Tosten Klaboe, O. G. Hanson (Northwood), Iver Thompson, M. F. Hegge, Helge Nelson, Nic. Berg, Knut Larson, P. Sponheim, Knut Monson, Thor Stenmo, Guldbrand Melby, Helge Dolve, Ole Fosse, Anders Ness, Thor Koldingness, Sam Thompson, Bendik Benson, Ed Peterson, Knut Halvorson, Arnt Hansen, T. R. Tobiason, Ereik and John Erstad, Nils and Grim Grimson, Arne Maaren, Christ Ness, Christ Lyste, Anton Berg, Ole Orland, J. J. Hogen, Halvor Aasen, And. Offerdal as well as Alb. Coto and Postmaster A. S. Ellingsen from Northwood and others.

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