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## **Polk County, Wisconsin** p. 48-49

James D. Reymert from Farsund was the first Norwegian in this county. He settled in St. Croix falls in 1859 as an agent for a large land company. There was life in the camp while he was here and it looked like St. Croix Falls would become a large city, but within two years the land company went bankrupt and Reymert moved away. He was, otherwise, a prominent person. (See more about him under Waukesha and Racine Co.). When Reymert came to Polk Co., there were only Indians and Yankees here.

In 1868 came John Vold, from Janesville, Rock Co. and settled in the area of Dresser Junction, where he was the first settler. He came from Mostadmarken, Strinden Parish.

The same year (1868) came Ole Sundlie and B. O. Solum, both from Sokendalen near Trondhjem and L. L. Selvig from Sande near Drammen to the area of Deer Park, where they settled and where they were the first settlers.

The first in the area of Cushing and North Valley was Nils Gullicksen (Grette) from Vaale near Holmestrand. He writes:

"I emigrated with all my family in 1869. we came first to Chicago, where we stopped for some weeks with my brother-in-law, Carl Meierhoff. In July we went further with horse and wagon and after 3 weeks and two days we reached St. Croix Falls. The trip was very arduous. The trip was very difficult because we neither understood nor could speak the English language. It was worst in Milwaukee. We had much trouble getting right out of the city. But we finally got out. At night we either lay in or near the wagon and almost every night there was a thunderstorm - American thunder and lightning, that we were not used to, so that the children and we ourselves were frightened by.

That the roads were extremely poor at that time, and with such weather, speaks for itself. When we came here there were no people anywhere. Still, since we had come here to find a home, we settled here. As soon as we had our log cabin in order, we began to feel at home. Later in the year came Ole L. Rolstad, Tosten Johnson, Johannes Gudminnsen and Ole O. Eng, all from Solør and settled near us, so now we had neighbours. They came from Madison, Wis."

The same year, Anders Paulsen settled at Star Prairie. He was from Hadeland. Ole Grønlund from Modum was the first at Laketown. He settled there in 1870. And the same year (1870), Georg Gillicksen from Hardanger came and settled in the area of Deronda. In 1872, Ole Gillicksen from Voss came, and settled in the area of Richardson. In 1873 we find B. Torgesen from Øvre Telemarken living in the area of Pineville. And in 1876, came Tore Bjørnson from Lesje, Gudbrandsdalen, and settled in Clam Falls. He was later the postmaster at that place. In the area of Amery, J. Djønne from Hardanger, was the first. Logging and mixed farming is Polk County's main source of income.

Østre Emanuel's congregation, that was established at Deer Park in 1870 by Pastor Ole J. Hagestad of the Norwegian Synod, was the first Norwegian

congregation in Polk County. The first Norwegian church was built by them in 1871. Now there are 12 Norwegian congregations and 9 churches, 7 of them belonging to The United Church, 4 to The Lutheran Free Church, 2 to The Norwegian Synod and 1 to The Methodist Church.

The aforementioned James D. Reymert represented Burnett County in the State Legislature already in 1862.

John A. Hansen of Rye, was the first Norwegian to hold a public position in the county itself. He was elected Supervisor in 1872.

One post office by the name of Hansen (named for the aforementioned Norwegian) existed here for a time. Other Norwegian place names have not been found by the author.

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