

# *Scandinavians in the Silverton Country*

*Their Arrival and Early Settlement*

*By Gertrude Tingelstad*



## INTRODUCTION

One hundred years ago – 1878 – a very husky twenty-six year old Norwegian immigrant living in Wisconsin made himself a four-legged stool because in the bunk house at the logging camp where he worked he needed a chair of his own. A wood chest, still labeled “Silverton, Oregon” reveals that this same young man also brought his family of five and their possessions from “Back East” to Silverton in 1892. These valuables, now mine, have made me wonder about the routes of other Scandinavians who ventured as far as the Silverton country and who also had had the urge to cross the Rockies.

It has been an interesting experience to trace the paths of a few of them and also to establish the reasons for their migration. As a people, they came at a rather late date in the pioneer period of Oregon’s history, but on the whole they came to stay. Hence, their story is one of significance in Oregon’s development.

It is with no apologies that I find and record the happenings in the life of my own grandparents, Bent and Beret Tingelstad, 1892 Oregon Norwegian pioneers; and their immediate descendants. Other personal references included are primarily from contemporary newspaper accounts, church records, correspondence, and interviews, the majority being with the descendants in those early families. My regret is that the story was not written some years ago when the accounts could have been first-hand and consequently presented more accurately, in much greater detail, and with more color. I hope, however, that a little of their style of western living is portrayed in the following pages.

## CHAPTER I THE OREGON APPEAL

Already for quite a few years Scandinavians had been leaving their European homes, crossing the ocean, and establishing roots in the States, primarily in the Midwest. They had left for a variety of reasons. Some had no land to inherit; others wished to escape military service; some came in response to letters of encouragement from those who had gone before. A restless spirit and religious conditions at home were reasons for some, and for many the opportunity to obtain free land was the most valid excuse. But then for some, after one-two-or twenty years, a new urge in need for one reason or another to be satisfied elsewhere, made some of them cross the Rockies to a land with a paucity of Scandinavians. Why? Why the Pacific Northwest?

In *Norwegian Settlement in the United States*, Carleton C Qualey suggests several reasons as being primary for the penetration into this area. By the 1880's and 1890's there had occurred a gradual exhaustion of good land east of the Great Plains, and in addition, the drought of 1886 had broken the "Dakota Fever" which had pulled many people that far west already. In 1883 the Northern Pacific railroad had been completed to Puget Sound and to Portland, Oregon. The Great Northern reached Seattle in 1893, and the Chicago, Milwaukee and St Paul railroad arrived in the western Washington cities in 1909. The Canadian routes also had become available. All these encouraged migration and even offered land. The published letters of those who had already gone west had aroused considerable interest in the area as did the advertisements relating to the Pacific Northwest in the Scandinavian American newspapers. The spirit of these people is well described in Dr. Kenneth C. Bjork's *West of the Great Divide*:

Rapid settlement of the country and growth in population were sufficient in themselves to provide a steady stream of immigrants in the westward movement. But to these impersonal factors the student must once again add a folkish element: the dissatisfaction among those persons who left, rightly or wrongly, that they were being cheated of a portion of the economic well-being and ancient exhilaration that they identified with America. Thus their opposition was by no means limited to weather, plagues, and Midwestern techniques of farming. They were critical of railroads, of grain buyers and speculators, of manufacturers and processors, and even of local townsmen. They identified politicians, especially those in office, with privilege and exploitation and occasionally used bitter words in denouncing them. More important than politics, however, was the spirit of independence, defiance, and even rebellion that frequently characterized the letters finding their way into the newspapers "back east." These letters suggest, in fact, that for some *Page Two* who left Norway the search for freedom, in all its unattainable richness and fullness did not end in the Middle West. It continued as a prime mover in a regional migration that produced, if not great opportunity and social advancement, at least a striking change in the pattern of their lives.<sup>2</sup>

Why to Oregon? Those who finally traversed the mountains and reached Oregon and the Willamette Valley were the same kind of people who had let the urge to go west take them to other parts of the North Pacific. As suggested already, dominant in the thinking and planning of many was the expectation of better economic conditions. It was therefore, the attraction of excellent agricultural opportunities that brought many of them to the Willamette Valley and specifically the Silverton country. Verification of additional reasons came in response to interview questions. A number of families came because friends or relatives had already made the move to Silverton; others wished to escape the severe climatic changes and their responses bringing storms, tornadoes, and cyclones. Some had the added incentive of a search for better educational opportunities for their children. After surveying family vital statistics, one might conclude that there was an additional reason for some. In those early days through common epidemics death quite frequently claimed young children. One family, which came from North Dakota, and likewise one from South Dakota, had each lost four children in diphtheria epidemics, and a third had had three taken from them. Others, like them, looked to better, milder climate in the Silverton area to ward off death.

They were to come to an old country near the end of the Oregon Trail. The native inhabitants had been the Molallis on the north, the Calapooias on the south and west, with the Klamaths migrating yearly - all of whom lived by hunting and fishing but not by land cultivation. Not all of them proved friendly when the emigrant trains first arrived in late November of 1842. The heart of the Mid-Willamette Valley population up to 1848 was in the French Creek and Salem areas but soon afterwards began to spread into Rickreall Valley and into the Silverton Country.

John, Wesley, and Thomas E. Howell settled on the prairie, later known as Howell Prairie, Daniel Waldo and his family and cattle herd crossed the Pudding River and made their home, the first settlement, in the Silverton Country In 1843. When the first wheat was planted in 1843, agriculture was started and wheat became the major crop during those early years. An interesting store is told of John C. Davenport who brought bees across the country to this area in August 1854 with the intention of using them as a means of support.

By 1852 many new settlers had arrived, and more than thirty families could call the Silverton Country “home”. Even more arrived in 1853, the last year for beginning settlement on donation land claims. A treaty with the Indians in the area was ratified March 3, 1855. with Congress appropriating \$62,260 and establishing a temporary reservation for the Indians.<sup>3</sup>

Nature gave the Silverton Country an abundance of beauty “Nestled in a little valley between the protective sentinel hills, Silverton lies along the bank of a lovely stream, Silver Creek, which winds through Marion County, about fifteen miles northeast of Salem. Situated thus, Silverton made strong appeal to early settlers...”<sup>4</sup> The favorable impression this small western community made on those who came is well documented in the many personal and newspaper letters they sent out soon after arrival.

In its early history Oregon’s population definitely did not reflect any Scandinavian heritage. The following statistics indicate clearly when their penetration began:

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*Oregon -Native and Foreign Born Population<sup>5</sup>*

Native Born			Foreign Born			Increase from 1890 to 1900			
1900	1890	1880	1900	1890	1880	Native Born		Foreign Born	
347,788	260,387	144,265	65,748	57,317	30,503	87,401	33.6 7/8	8,431	14.7 7/8

**The Foreign Born Population in Oregon from Scandianvian Countries<sup>6</sup>**

1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	
0	56	205	983	3,374	4,555	10,099	<b>Sweden</b>
0	43	76	574	2,271	2,789	6,843	<b>Norway</b>
0	0	0	0	1,525	2,131	4,734	<b>Finland</b>
0	50	87	385	1,288	1,663	3,215	<b>Denmark</b>

The number and percentage of white persons in Oregon of foreign parentage, having either one or both parents born in a Scandinavian country in 1900 was as follows<sup>7</sup>:

Denmark      3,319   2.4%  
Norway        5,566   4.0%  
Sweden        8,270   5.0%

For Marion County, the location of Silverton, the 1900 census showed its foreign born population by country of birth as follows for the Scandinavians<sup>8</sup>:

Denmark 82; Finland 36; Norway 199; Sweden 133.

Norwegian first generation population by states<sup>9</sup>:

Oregon	1860	1870	1880	1890
	43	76	574	2,271

The early Scandinavians who came to the Silverton area knew that although the country had been settled for many years there was still a great amount of land available and that immigrants were being encouraged to settle here. Long before the Scandinavians became serious about migration, the good qualities of this far away land had been advertised by one of their own people. Anton Lasses, in 1851, wrote home to Drammen, Norway, from Portland and described his nine-month journey to the West. He made favorable comments about the food sources and the climate and said he had no regrets for having left Norway, even though he had lost his clothing enroute: ‘For I figure that in my land I have considerably greater value than in the little money I lost.’ Even though he expected hardship in Oregon, he thought his life should be easier here than in Norway, and perhaps some day he could return to Norway as a wealthy man.<sup>10</sup>

Ernst Skarstedt in his *Oregon och Washington*, published in Swedish in 1890, said that a traveler had written that he had never seen a country as beautiful as the valley through which the Willamette River flows. He described its glory in the spring and the summer. The assets of Silverton were also outlined in the R.L. Polk *Salem City and Marion County Directory*. It mentioned that Silver Creek provided power for a flour mill, two saw mills and other industries, such as a wagon shop, brick yard and sash and door factory. By 1893 it advertised three churches, a school costing \$7,000 with 5 teachers, a large hall, library, lodges of Odd Fellows and Knights of Pythias, a volunteer fire department, brass band, several fine business blocks, electric lights, a bank, two good hotels ...<sup>11</sup> As early as 1889 the local *Page Four* newspaper, the *Silverton Appeal*, made direct inducements through the real estate advertisements of such as GA. Webb: “Come to Silverton, The Garden Spot of America”.

Scandinavian newspapers in their articles and their advertisements, as well as the letters they published in the correspondence column, brought the West into the consciousness of their readers. An article in *Vikingen* indicated that no section of the country was attracting as much attention as Montana Oregon, and Washington.<sup>12</sup> O. M. Peterson, special correspondent for *Skandinaven*, wrote in the August 1891 *Husbibliotek* a lengthy article describing the conditions in Oregon, primarily the Willamette Valley. He reported that winter was seldom more than six weeks long, that poor crops were almost unknown, that there were no harmful insects or other plagues such as hail, tornadoes, and wind storms. He also reported on the yields for the crops and mentioned that fruit and vegetables were among them. Peterson described the valley, the land in the hills for cattle raising and the low lands for agriculture. Some of the large acreages taken as donation claims were being divided now, and so it was an opportune time to come to buy at reasonable prices. Likewise, migration was not great yet because the area was relatively unknown. In describing the valley land he mentioned that much of it yet had some trees on it so nearly every farm was plentifully supplied with building material, fence posts, and firewood. He described the various soils and suggested crops to be grown and suitable places for hops and fruit. The good climate came partly because of the influence of the Japanese current. Peterson suggested the southern part of the valley or eastern Oregon as the best locations for those afflicted with lung disorders. But whoever planned to come would be wise to check for more information with the Oregon Immigration Office in Portland. Their information should be reliable.<sup>13</sup>

#### Footnotes

1. Carleton C. Qualey, *Norwegian Settlement in the United States* (Northfield. Minn.: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1938), p.189.
2. Kenneth O. Bjork, *West of the Great Divide* (Northfield. Minn.: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1958), p.2021.

3. Robert Horace Down, *A History of the Silverton Country* (Portland, Ore.: The Berncliff Press, 1926), p.1-i36; Lloyd D. Black. "Middle Willamette Valley Population Growth," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 43 (March 1942): 40-55.
4. Ruth O. Kephart, "The Silverton Story," *Marion County History* 5 (June 1959): 34.
5. Decorah Posten, *The Scandinavians in the United States* (Decorah, Iowa: The Anundson Pub. Co., 19?), p.14.
6. William O. Loy, *Alias of Oregon*. (Eugene, Or.: University of Oregon Books, 1916), p.24.
7. U.S. Census Office. 12th Census, 1900, *CensusReports* (Washington, D.C. U.S. Census Office, 1901) v.1, p.xcix.
8. *Ibid.*, v.1., p.778-779.
9. O.M. Norlie, *History of the Norwegian People in America*, (Minneapolis:Augsburg Publishing House, 1925), p.233.
10. Theodore Blegen, ed., *Land of Their Choice*, (St. Paul, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), p 232-234.
11. R.L. Polk, *Salem City and Marion County Directory, 1893*, (Portland, Ore.: R.L. Polk, 1893), p.162.
12. *Vikingen*, Sept. *fl*, 1888.
13. O.M. Peterson. "Oregon," *Husbibijothek*, August 1891, p.369.379.

## CHAPTER II WHO WERE ATTRACTED?

A John Nielsen appears to be the first Norwegian to come to the Silverton Country. According to *Norsk Amerikaneren* he came in 1852 from Illinois in a company of landseekers. The same fall one of the company, John Davenport, went back to Illinois, and in the spring of 1853 he brought Mrs. Nielsen and the family with him to Oregon. They came by way of the Panama Canal, from there by ship to Astoria, and then through Salem to the Waldo Hills, near Silverton, where her husband was working. Later on the family moved to Linn County Oregon. Another account, from an interview with Lou Davenport in 1939, refers to the same John Nelson family which came across Panama. Davenport said that the family had brought a hive of bees and a billy goat on their journey across the isthmus. The natives packed all their stuff across the isthmus on burros. Apparently the natives wanted the goat, so they drove the burro off into the bush and told the Nelsons they had lost the goat. When the Nelsons arrived in Silverton, they were destitute, and fortunately were befriended by Davenport's uncle, Tim Davenport, for awhile. The combined stories indicate that the first Scandinavian family did not find an easy way to reach their promised land.<sup>1</sup>

Another early settler was A. L. Nelson who located near Mount Angel, a community several miles from Silverton. In the 1870's, after living there almost two decades, Nelson could speak with authority when asked to write an article for the March 9, 1892 issue of *Skandinaven* to describe the area around Silverton and to suggest possibilities for farming. For ten years he had enjoyed living in Wisconsin but now he preferred what Oregon had to offer.<sup>2</sup>

The name of P. K. Johnson is one which has been identified in several records of Oregon history. He was born in Stjørdalen, Norway, July 24, 1838, arrived in America in 1866, spent seven years in Illinois and Wisconsin, and then moved to Oregon in 1872 or 1873. Here he purchased 86 acres, 70 of which he farmed at the same time as he continued his trade as a carpenter. He was

...one of a group who organized a travel company planning to go to Portland. It was their intention to look for farmland and to settle either in Oregon or in Washington Territory. He reported that about 25 people definitely would leave Clinton Junction April 22, 1873. They would go to Rock Island on the Mississippi, thence by the Illinois Central to Omaha, and from there by first-class coach to San Francisco; the coach would be attached to a freight train. Each grown person would pay \$65 for a through ticket; children from five to twelve years, half fare; those under five would travel free. From San Francisco to Portland each adult would pay \$10 in gold for steamer passage. One hundred pounds of luggage would be carried free and excess weight would be paid for at a rate of \$6.00 per 100 pounds."<sup>3</sup>

Peter H. Thompson, who also came from Stjørdalen, Norway, has been credited with being the first arrival in the settlement later identified by the Norwegian name "Nidaros", post office, Monitor, Oregon. He came in 1872, about six years before any other Scandinavians to this community seven miles from Silverton.<sup>4</sup>

The 1880 Census schedules list only a few Scandinavian names for the area. The Silverton Precinct register a Y. Sandberg and family (husband and wife born in Sweden) and an Angus Peterson and wife (born in Sweden and Denmark) and two or three others, born in the United States.

But the real thrust for a movement to this new land by Scandinavians came shortly after 1890 when several people who had surveyed the area began to offer real encouragement to other Scandinavians. The Reverend Mr. Bjug Harstad of Mayville, North Dakota, in 1890 while president of the Minnesota District of the Synod

for the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (commonly called, The Norwegian Synod) had been delegated to go west to investigate what might be done toward organizing scattered Lutherans of the Pacific Northwest into congregations. At the same time he became the primary instrument for the developing interest in organizing a Lutheran school, established subsequently as Pacific Lutheran University, at Parkland, Washington.

In his travels he paid a visit to the Willamette Valley early in 1891, where he became convinced that Silverton was an ideal place for a colony of Norwegians to develop. So he wrote to Ingebret Larsen, a friend and former parishioner in Trail County, North Dakota, and urged him to come to investigate Oregon and Silverton, and if the area seemed favorable to him, to encourage others to come so that a Norwegian colony could be established in Silverton. Larsen was interested in a western move, and in time this meant that he was the one who especially influenced some of those Scandinavians who first were attracted to the Silverton Country.<sup>5</sup>

Ingebret Larsen was born in Hadeland, Norway. He came first to Columbia County, Wisconsin and from there went eventually to Trail County, North Dakota, in 1871. His first wife died from tuberculosis, and he himself was in ill health some of the time, partly because of frozen feet resulting from a snowshoeing trip to Fargo for the mail. These factors, plus a fire which destroyed the family home, made him think of moving west. As a result, he heeded Pastor Harstad's encouragement, for he had great confidence in Harstad whom he had helped considerably in parish work in North Dakota. It was with the added incentive that a church could and should be established in this new community that Larsen set out for Oregon. He was also motivated to inspire others to do likewise and to interest them in helping him establish the Scandinavian identity in Silverton.<sup>6</sup>

By October 1891 Larsen had completed his exploratory trips to the coast. His intentions to move were publicized in the *Lutheran University Herald*, the Norwegian newspaper recently established at Pacific Lutheran University.

...For bigger families with less well-filled purses Oregon is the best place. Ingebret Larsen from Mayville, North Dakota has just now been down there and looked over the land for the second time this year. He intends to leave North Dakota this fall and settle in the neighborhood of Silverton, a little town about 40 miles south from Portland ... Larsen will not be alone, but wishes more good people with him. Mr. Storaasli thinks also about purchasing land by Silverton ...<sup>7</sup>

At the same time Larsen's home town paper, the *Mayville Tribune*. October 31, 1891. announced his auction and that his reason for leaving was to seek a milder climate; the *Tribune* for December 4, 1891. recorded the departure of the Larsen *Page Seven* family and wished them success in their new home.<sup>8</sup>

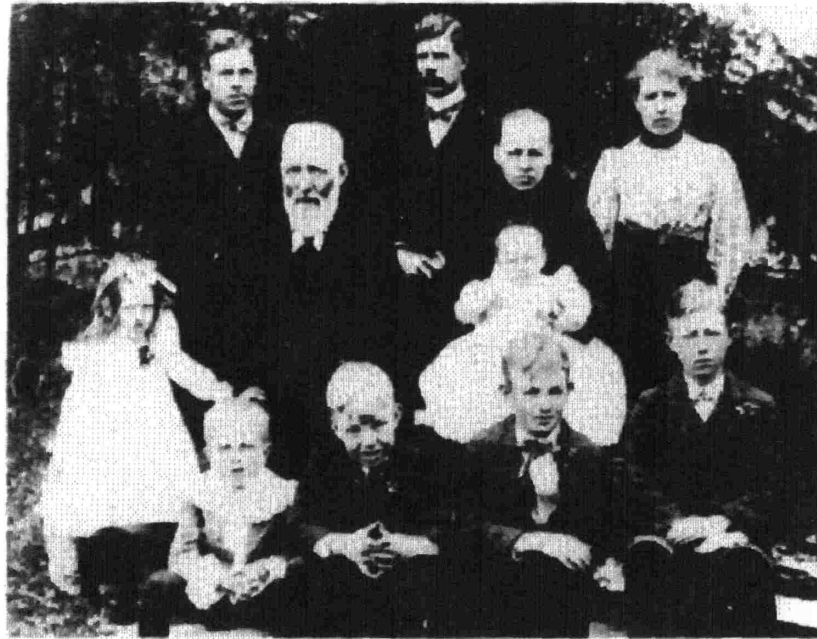
In order to be very certain that the most favorable location was being found for the colony, Larsen, soon upon arrival, took a trip into Polk and Yanthill counties. He found cheaper, less wooded land there and opportunities to sell wood for fuel or staves, but still he thought Silverton seemed to provide the best future.<sup>9</sup>

Word of this movement for a Silverton colony spread quite extensively, particularly because of an article in the Norwegian-American newspaper, *Amerika*, (Oct. 7, 1891 issue); which A.G. Ovens of Mankato, Minnesota, wrote about the proposed Norwegian Colony in Oregon.

Mr. Ingebret Larsen from Mayville, North Dakota. Ole O. Storaasli from Tacoma, Washington, and some others have thought of founding a colony of countrymen and fellow believers in Oregon and will seek in the near future to assemble men enough to form a congregation and so establish a church and school, so that they shall not miss these most important blessings in their new home.



This is obviously a good plan and a good enterprise, that should be of interest and the support of all who hold God's word dear and will build up His kingdom among us ... There is no other place in the Far West which will attract and satisfy those who come from the east as the Willamette Valley in Oregon, with overflowing wheat acreage and delicious fruit orchards, with remarkably fresh good water, and unsurpassed climate, and the most beautiful scenery one can imagine. And it is right in the valley that the planned colony will be built.



**THE INGEBRET LARSEN FAMILY**

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Oversen described the town of Silverton -its beauty and its produce - in some detail and then advised all who wanted more information about the colony to write to Ingebret Larsen, Marion County, Oregon, or to Ole O. Storaasli in Tacoma, who could give information since he had been there and in addition had lived in the West a longer time. Storaasli, who planned to move to Silverton in the fall, would gladly send pamphlets and other information concerning different things out there.<sup>10</sup>

In October of the same year, the *Lutheran University Herald* described the possibilities in Silverton and assured the readers that they could make good contacts through Ingebret Larsen, a very trustworthy man in Mayville, North Dakota. Again O. O. Storaasli was also suggested as a contact person, as was the Silverton realtor, Mr. Webb.<sup>11</sup> In time Webb's advertisements in the Silverton newspaper included the name of Ingebret Larsen as one of his references.

There was word also from Larsen himself. In the March 30, 1892, issue of *Amerika* he told those who planned to come to travel over the Canadian Pacific because this railroad would arrange for passengers from St. Paul, Minnesota to Silverton, Oregon, on the same ticket, and besides it was five dollars cheaper than on any other train. He had negotiated with the Northern Pacific and Union Pacific, but could do nothing with them; they would not take passengers any farther than Portland, Oregon.<sup>12</sup>

AG, Oversen wrote a second time about the colony in *Amerika*, March 2, 1892.

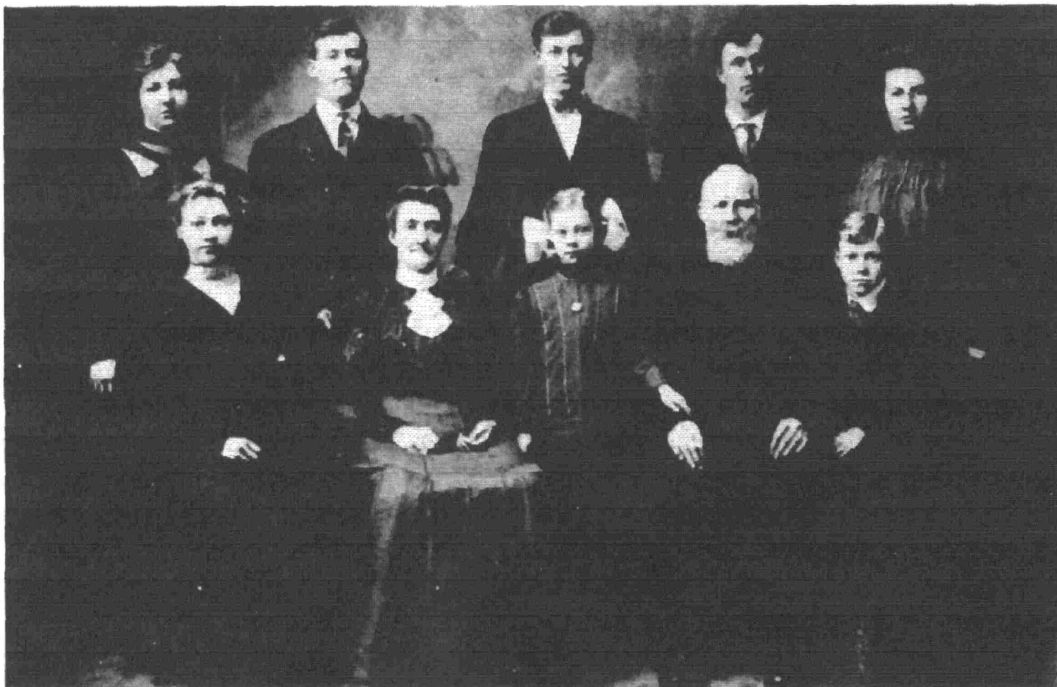
In regard to the climate Larsen explains after his exploratory, trip: Climate is remarkably good, here it is ... mild, and I and my family are in good health and well, and as far as I know, there is nothing to complain about in the climate ... In regard to the land he says: Here at Silverton they have now set the price on the land much higher, because there are three different ones who want to start colonies. I have been assured by a party in Dallas that I can have all the land I want for our people for from \$15 to \$25 per acre for cultivated farms and from \$6 to \$8 per acre for uncleared land. I believe that it is time for the people to come here to Oregon this summer since assuredly in two years there will be an overland railroad which will go across Oregon to Astoria, and it seems that it will go through Dallas, and when this railroad comes here through Oregon, the land will increase in value. Larsen is now on a trip farther south to see what he can find there ... All who want to join in this chosen place must go there next month. Larsen will give more definite information. The aim is to get organized a circuit as big as possible of true Lutherans who will take seriously the building of the Lord's congregation in spite of good times or bad, and not let themselves be scared away from the Lutheran faith and knowledge, even if they are called "Missourians" or whatever else they can think of.<sup>13</sup>

Evidence of Larsen's first following is found in news items in the *Mayville Tribune* of Mayville, North Dakota.

Auction sale of personal property of effects... AG. Molden .. take place on Tues. the 19th .. Mr. Molden has concluded to remove from North Dakota to Oregon where he has purchased land near Silverton, Ingebret Larson's post office address.

AT. Haugen thinks of joining the Trail County colony In Oregon after his affairs have been arranged.

The Severson sisters who have been conducting a laundry next to the photograph gallery have decided to embark for Silverton, Oregon next Saturday in company with others who start that day ... Iver Larsen and family left for Silverton, Oregon last Thursday ...<sup>14</sup>



THE KITTEL FUNRUE FAMILY

Then other Scandinavians followed in their dust. The Bent Tingelstad family came from Hickson, North Dakota. Upon arrival, July 17, 1892, the Tingelstads went to Larsen's home and stayed for a week while the father could purchase horses, a wagon, and lumber in order to build a small cabin of single rustic walls, as

“cold as Greenland” and of such limited space that the youngest of the four children slept in a trundle bed beneath that of the parents. This remained the family home for four years until time and money allowed for a large house to be built.<sup>15</sup>

Albert Olsen, also from Larsen’s area in Dakota, came on the train with his family, three horses, a dog, and all kinds of machinery. Also from Mayville, G. G. Evens came out alone in 1892 and purchased the valley which became known as Evens Valley. According to his daughter, Mabel Holman, the family came later on the train in a caravan of twenty-seven families. Their first home, also, was a one-room house of logs. Kittil Funrue traveled alone from Petersburg, Nebraska, also in 1892, in order to search for a better place to rear his family. The trip in itself could have been discouraging because he had his railroad ticket stolen from him while traveling through Seattle. In 1893 the G.M. Opsund family arrived with six horses and two cows which had accompanied them on the railroad journey. Mrs. Halvor Halvorsen recalled their trip west in 1893 for Lorraine Fletcher in 1969 and told of the immigrant car in which they traveled, with sleepers on one side. They pushed the seats together in the daytime and sat on them. There was a cook stove with an oven. Everyone brought his own food. Upon arrival the Halvorsens accompanied the man in charge of the animal car as he was going to Silverton; from there they walked two miles to his farm. The family remained there all winter in an upstairs room - with bed, trundle bed, table and chairs - until her husband could build a shanty on the land they had purchased.<sup>16</sup> Reier Lien through his association with Pastor Harstad and his work was able to follow Harstad to Washington. Using some of his time to sell subscriptions to a religious paper, he wandered into Oregon, which he learned to like very much. Lien took half of the \$1,000 he had earned in the West to bring his wife and family of seven children back to Oregon to a two room shack but later was able to rent a house for five dollars a month.<sup>17</sup> John Sateren was one of the first who came in 1891 after he had spent some while in Parkland, Washington. Thus it was that very often the newcomers were met by old friends who assisted them in locating. For example, the Albert Olsens were met by the A.G. Molden family, and the Opsunds found their friends, the Ole Dahls.

Similar stories, undoubtedly, could be told of the journeys of many others. These are but representative of what may have occurred in the experiences of the majority of them. The following list is a compilation from several sources of the names of some of the other Scandinavian families who arrived between 1892 and 1897, with the date or approximate date of their settlement.

Julius Alm 1893	O. L. Hatteberg 1895	Nils Pedersen 1893
Andreas L. Ask 1893	Olava Iversen	Andrew Petersen 1895
A.G. Anderson 1893	Knut Jensen 1893	Ole Satern 1893
John Anderson 1893?	Gustav Johnson 1893?	Christopher Sather 1893
C. I. Benson 1894	Hans Johnson 1892	A. G. Steelhammer 1892
Simon Berseng 1894	J H. Johnson 1893?	M. G. Storaasli 1893
T A Brokke 1897	<i>Page Eleven</i>	O. G. Storaasli 1893?
C. Christensen 1893?	Julia Johnson 1893	Signe Storaasli 1893
Marcus Christensen 1893?	Julius Johnson 1897	Bernt Storlie 1893
Paul Dullum 1893	Morris Johnson 1893	A.A. Svaren 1892
B. L. Foss 1892	Henry Kloster 1892	Axel Tau 1892
John Fuhr 1891?	T. O. Kvaslerud 1893?	Nile Tokstad 1893
Peder Fuhr 1893	Ole J. Langsev 1893	Andrew Torgerson 1894?
P. L. Goplerud 1897	A. O. Linflott 1893?	H. G. Ulsager 1895?
Gullick Gullicksen 1892	Mikkel Mikkelsen 1897	Thron Ulsager 1895
Johanna Gullicksen 1892	Oluf Olsen 1893?	Gunder E. Winger 1895?
Harry Hage 1893?	Edmund Olson 1892	Ole Vold 1893?
H. G. Hansen 1897?	Lars Opstad 1892	

The following Scandinavians settled in the Nidaros community near Monitor. Several of them came in the 1880s.<sup>18</sup>

Andreas Andersen	Ole E F. Lee	Ole Rønning
Peder J. Anderson	Lars Melby	Ole Ryen
A. I. Aus	Anders L. Nilsen	Edvard Wormdahl
Knute Gregersen	Ivar Olsen	John Wormdahl
Ole Gregersen	Peder Olsen	Peter H. Wormdahl
P. O. Gunderson	Edward Pedersen	

It was interesting to trace the route of some of these Scandinavian families from their European homes to Silverton. A limited survey showed that the majority came from Norway, several from Denmark, and a very few from Sweden. They came mainly as young adults, independent of family, but some few came as members of a family caravan. Only one or two families, such as the Ole Saterns, came directly from Norway to the West Coast, to Stanwood, Washington and then to Silverton. All the other families had spent at least a few years in one of the Midwestern states (the “East” to them) before coming to Oregon. The greater number came from North Dakota, Iowa, and Minnesota, with several from Wisconsin, South Dakota, and Nebraska. About three families detoured through Washington state or California.

#### Footnotes

1. *Norsk Amerikaneren*, hft. 2, Oct.-Dec. 1916, p 133-134. U.S. Works Progress Administration, *Ethnic Group: Interviews. Series I* (Lou Davenport, May 1939) (Salem, Ore.: State Library. 1939), Box 63.
  2. Kenneth O. Bjork, *West of the Great Divide* (Northfield, Minn.: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1958), p 425-426.
  3. Ibid, p.334-345; *Portrait and Biographical Record of the Willamette Valley, Oregon*. (Chicago: Chapman, 1903), p.1208-1209; Martin Ulvestad, *Nordmaendene i Amerika, deres historie og rekord*. (Minneapolis: History Book Company's Forlag, 1907), v.1, p. 229; O. M. Norlie, *History of the Norwegian People in America*. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1925), p.247.
  4. *Norsk Amerikaneren*, hft. 2, Oct.-Dec. 1916, p.143.
  5. *Pacific Lutheran Herald*, July 6, 1932.
  6. Maggie Berg, interview (July 26, 1977) and personal letter, Aug. 25, 1977; *Page Twelve* Louise Saunders, personal letter Nov. 27, 1977; Bertha Hanson Lilly, personal letter. Nov. 18. 1977.
- Page Twelve*
7. *Lutheran University Herald*. Oct. 1891.
  8. *Mayville Tribune*, Oct. 30, 1891 and Dec. 4, 1891.
  9. Bjork, *West*, p.426-427..
  10. *Amerika*, Oct. 7, 1.891.
  11. *Lutheran University Herald*, Aug. 1, 1891.
  12. *Amerika*, March 30, 1892.
  13. *Amerika*, March 2, 1892.
  14. *Mayville Tribune*, July 8, 1892; July 20, 1893; Nov. 23, 1893.
  15. Edvin Tingelstad, *Memoirs* (Corvallis, Or., 1973)
  16. Helen Olson Halvorsen & Lorraine Fletcher, “19th Century Midwife,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (March 1969)
  17. Rudolph Lien, Reier Lien Family History; Mrs. Peter O. Paulson, personal letter. Aug. 25, 1977.
  18. *Norsk Amerikaneren* hft 2, p.133-144 and scattered sources.

## CHAPTER III SOON THEY WROTE ABOUT OREGON

Not long after their arrival, these western transplants began sending their letters of impression and advice to the Norwegian American newspapers. The first pastor of the Scandinavian Lutheran Evangelical Congregation, the Reverend Mr. Nils Pedersen, upon request from his former community, Bode, Iowa, wrote a lengthy article for *Amerika* in which he described the trip west, the community of Silverton - geography, crops, farming conditions, climate - and the establishment of the congregation.

Silverton ... lies in Marion County in the extraordinarily fruitful Willamette Valley, called "The garden spot of Oregon" which reaches from the Columbia River on the north and 125 miles south, and from the coast mountains in the west from 30 to 45 miles east to the Cascade Mountains. This valley is, as said, very fruitful and could give a livelihood to many hundred thousand more people than it now has, when it is all settled. The land varies from bare prairie and hills to real "rolling" forest lands.

The forests in many places are thin and consist of small trees which are not too difficult to clear. The old settlers say that the greater part of the forest has grown up in the last 40 or 50 years. Before any settlement of white people began, the Indians burned the valley off every year. In some places, especially the nearer one comes to the mountains, particularly the Cascade Mountains, the trees are much bigger and taller. But clearing the land goes quickly, anyway, because one can loosen the stumps with dynamite. It costs from 10 to 50 dollars per acre if the forest is large.

The valley cuts through from the north to the southeast of the Willamette River, which is navigable for about 100 miles. Four railroads also cut through the valley from north to south, and on the eastern one of these, the so-called Woodburn Branch, lies Silverton, about 45 miles south of Portland. A 90 mile train goes also from the mountains in the east and all the way to the coast at Yaquina Bay, so there is good opportunity for farmers to market their produce at the many market places one finds along these lines.

Here wheat, rye, barley, oats, and hops grow, not to forget the remarkable potatoes. The potato bugs which are such a plague in the East have not managed to come over the mountains ... The reason wheat thrives especially well is because of the remarkable quality of the soil, but above all is the climate ... neither too cold or too warm the wheat gets all the time it needs to mature to its fullness. It sounds unbelievable, but when one with his own eyes sees wheat six feet high which is usually four or five- and every single kernel is full grown ... You have to have some money to raise hops because there are various expenses connected with them since harvest comes in hop picking time. The farmer rushes through the town streets from house to *Page fourteen* house to hire anyone he can find to pick the hops from the vine. The family goes out and camps the three or four weeks the hop picking continues. A man who had nine acres in hops told me the other day that he regularly could get \$200 per acre at 17 cents a pound.

Fruit ... grows of remarkable quality and in abundance: apples, pears, cherries, strawberries, plums, prunes, and grapes etc. I saw the other day a cherry tree whose crown measured 54 feet in circumference and whose branches dragged to the ground with the weight of the fruit. Last year they sold cherries from that tree for \$18.00. It seems unbelievable. Strawberries they have seen which measured 5 inches in circumference; but Ingebret Larsen says he saw strawberries last year in Portland that measured 13 inches.

The cultivation of prune trees front now on will be a large product of the Willamette Valley ... People have started to graft branches of prune trees into a two year old branch of a peach tree, and they get a prune tree that is better than anything they have known before and that produces a big tasty fruit that in quality surpasses the best California prunes. What gives this an advantage over any other fruit is that it can be dried and sent over the whole world. To dry it requires no skill. Anyone can do it by himself with the little expense of a drying house.

Timothy grows unbelievably here ... Clover thrives also especially here and is good especially for pasture. For pigs ... cattle but most for dairying or home use ... Calves are always in demand and they sell for \$6 to \$8 when they are 6 to 8 weeks old ... Small horses - ponies - are plentiful and inexpensive, from \$10 to \$30, depending upon if they are wild or tame. Big strong horses, from 14 to 16 or 1700 pounds, sell from \$125 to \$175.

They have sheep on all the farms, and they are not only useful but necessary for the winter wheat. One begins to seed wheat in September, when the first rain showers come and continues to seed until New Years. The mild weather and plenty of rain make the grain grow quickly, and if one didn't do something to hold it down, as a result, during the winter the grain would lie down and to a large extent would rot. So after the ground has been well cultivated in the fall they turn the sheep flocks on to the wheat fields, and there the sheep graze from October to April on the green wheat, and are then good for butchering. In that way keeping the wheat down to the bare ground. the shorter the better, throughout the winter, not only the root becomes stronger but the wheat grows thicker ... Chicken raising is one of the most profitable enterprises one can engage in ... Here they produce the whole winter through if they get good care...

In addition, Pedersen wrote that wagon buggies were more expensive because imported; furniture, not so. because it was manufactured there. Lumber was cheap. A good house could be built from \$100 worth of lumber. Household supplies were no more expensive than in the East; clothing slightly higher. Day wages were \$1 to \$1.50 without board for ordinary work; carpenters and mechanics received \$2 to \$4.

The climate he called "unbelievable" with no heat in summer and cold in winter and no storms worth mentioning. "No flies, no mosquitoes, or other insects ... Certainly there is much dust here and it is fine as meal and light as a feather also; and yet it is not as bad as one would think, because there is no strong wind here to drive through the air". He said it was comfortable to sleep and that temperatures went to 50 at night and to 70 or 80 in the days, seldom higher than 85. "But wait, say many people, until the rains come and they will find out what the West Coast is like. I shall at that time give a truthful description of that also when I have experienced it. Until then I will believe what honest people say who have been here in the rainy Page  
Fifteen season. 'It is not so bad yet,' they say. And certainly it isn't as bad as many told us before we came here'."

Pedersen then told of Larsen's search for a suitable place in Oregon and his decision for Silverton.

After he had lived in the town for a half year he bought in May 1892 a well cultivated farm, a little southwest of town in the so-called Waldo Hills, where the land is of the best quality and where he now has a cozy home for himself and his family. But not only had Larsen an eye for choosing a place for a good colony looking toward the future, but he assured himself soon of a good church location at a good place in town to build a church ... A short time after Larsen had settled here and before he had bought his farm, Bent Tingelstad came ... He bought a valuable piece of land 1 1/2 miles from town. He became a trusty helper for Larsen in establishing the colony. Soon others came: H. Kloster, A. Steelhammer- blacksmith, A.G. Molden ... Here is a favorable immigration from the East, so the congregation's outlook for a good growth is very bright. The Lord give us the means and the desire also from this place to work for His kingdom's growth and steadfastness...

Later in the letter he urged those who wanted to come to this milder climate to do so soon before "prices go up and while the fare is cheap". He had found few people to be dissatisfied. "Now we have portrayed Silverton as a good place for Norwegians to settle, but likewise we have not said that there is no other place just as good. We will point out that there are several places in this valley where Norwegian colonies could organize ... Naturally we will not hesitate to give advice and direction for anyone who might wish it." <sup>1</sup>

A. I. Aus began what was to be about a yearly account to the *Decorah Posten* in the Dec. 3, 1893 issue. He wrote about the various kinds of soil, the topography, and weather which allowed for seed time throughout the year, of the forest lands, with the comment that no trees here were particularly suitable for fence posts, but they hardly ever used worm fences; that most trees had a more lush growth than in the East, but they had much moss on them. Some clearing of the land had been done, but it was difficult to get rid of the stumps. One solution had been to bring in angora goats which helped with the grubbing since they eat everything. Land prices he considered very high, but in spite of that fact the Norwegians were coming. Some, however, returned because of disappointments. He referred to the farm acreages smaller than in the East and mentioned the new crops, hops and prunes, as well as other fruits as possibilities. He considered the church

not very well established because some people who came out had not stayed by their religious background. Aus advised those who planned to come not to do as he but come first on a visit. "If you travel around with real estate agents, 'beware', otherwise, as the song writer says 'He who wants to play with fire might get burnt'." He also said to use your own eyes and ears. Oregonians are usually very frank and hospitable, and one gets more truthful information from them than from a land agent. "Also clear everything with the transportation company before making a commitment".<sup>2</sup>

By 1895 free advice and encouragement to prospective Scandinavian settlers was quite available. Concerning Salem, the nearby capital, "H. I." wrote in *Decorah Posten*:

Salem, Oregon lies in the middle of the Willamette Valley, 25 miles south from Portland. All state institutions are established here ..., and also Willamette University, the best school in the state. The last eight years they *Page Sixteen* have built four big school houses, which will be a distinction for such a state. Salem is also county seat for Marion County. The town is about 12,000 inhabitants. This valley is Oregon's garden spot ... Here are quite a few Scandinavians, but we will gladly have many more. They all seem to thrive and be at peace ...<sup>3</sup>

The letter from Aus that year spoke favorably of the weather even though the rain had started early and the summer had been warmer than usual, with the rare occurrence of lightning and a thunderstorm which struck several trees. He did not forget to mention the tremendous amount of dust in summer time. The letter further detailed farming methods and problems and discussed the economics of the day. Again he advised those planning to come first to get assistance from a reliable person when looking over the land and then rent, if possible, for awhile.<sup>4</sup>

The same year *Decorah Posten* carried C. Marsh's enticement from Salem. He would pay for a train trip from any place in the "East" in order to get Scandinavians out here to purchase land at foreclosure prices. "Always enough rain for large crops" and the following, signed by Ole Hagen, in the Dec. 20, 1895 "Korrespondance" column:

Silverton, Ore. We Norwegians in the town and the surroundings are all well. The weather is now in the beginning of December as fine as on the most delightful summer in the East. The grass is green, and the farmers are seeding. That is something one cannot do in the East at this time of the year. There is not much we get for what we have to sell, but so also has the price on the land gone down, so one can now buy land quite cheap; but those who come should beware of the land agents.<sup>5</sup>

The December 1895 *Pacific Herald* of Parkland, Washington carried the Rev. Mr. Nils Pedersen's answer to letters asking for advice concerning a move to Oregon. He advised neither one way nor the other, for he realized that some people had heard stories indicating that Silverton was almost a paradise, but that when they had come, they were disappointed, homesick, and found much to complain about. Not even the beautiful climate that the Lord let this coast enjoy satisfied them. Pedersen reminded them that they might be leaving a home where they had lived possibly twenty or thirty years, where they had many relatives and good friends, and the church was well established, and then they were going a couple thousand miles away where possibly they did not know a single soul. It was understandable that they might be dissatisfied upon arrival. He seemed to think that the less well-to-do and poor were as a rule better satisfied about the new situation. They settled down at once because they knew that they could not go back unless they lost all or almost all they had. Reverend Pedersen's encouragement was that if people would stay through all seasons and get settled they would as a rule be quite well satisfied and would not wish to leave. Those who move back and forth most likely would eventually stay on the coast. He made one exception, for present conditions were not good, especially for poor people who must live by their labor. Those who were debt free were not suffering so should not complain. Everything was very cheap, but that fact did not help the poor who could not get work. Flour was 70c a sack, potatoes, 10-12c a bushel, butter 10c a pound, pork 4-5c, beef 6-7c, honey 10-12c, dried fruit 5-6c, with eggs the only favorable price, 20c a dozen. He advised people without capital not

to come in the near future. Land was about one-third its price now, so it was a good time to buy if one could afford to come. He acknowledged that the climate could have a good effect on half sick, poorly folk who want to come, but a place that is good for all ills cannot be found.<sup>6</sup>

Nils M. Lunde from the Salem area also wrote for *Decorah Posten*, May 13, 1896. *Page Seventeen* In all the eleven years he had been in the West he had had good crops. The prices also had been good until recently because of the Depression but it looked as if times would be better. Land price was at its bottom, \$20 to \$25 per acre for good cultivated farm land. "I have only 10 acres here, but I will not exchange them for the best 160 acre farm in North Dakota. They grow fruit of all possible kinds and grains of many kinds, so they have something to sell the whole year through. Likewise they grown enough hay for a cow and a horse. This way one doesn't need as big a farm as in Dakota and Minnesota," He said that hopes for more employment in the summer seemed likely. "There are over 100 Norwegian families within a circle of fifteen miles and room for many more." while not a single Norwegian family could have been found around Salem when he came.<sup>7</sup>

Within six months Lunde wrote again in response to questions in the many letters he had received after his letter had been published. Questions included things like the price of land and conditions for purchase, size of Salem, price of milk cows and work horses, raising poultry, growing clover and other domestic grasses, cost of forest land, prices of household equipment and food, wages and work possibilities, weather, cost of building a house, etc. Besides answering their questions he described Salem, its population, and its streets and alleys lined with trees. The town had an electric train running six to eight miles throughout, and in addition there were four passenger trains a day, besides a half dozen steamboats which went regularly between Portland, Salem, and the smaller towns.<sup>8</sup>

After five years, in 1897, the economic picture appeared to be a little brighter. Several newspaper reports confirmed this impression. A L Aus in his annual letter to the *Decorah Posten* wrote about the poor spring weather and crops but that the fall had not been too bad. Th. price of hops had gone up from 5-6 cents to 13 cents a pound. Wheat, likewise, climbed to 75c per bushel; potatoes were 30c a bushel, and oats, which was scarce, was 30c a bushel. Milk cows sold for \$10-\$20; sheep, \$1.00 to \$15; horses, \$10 to \$100, and swine butchered at four cents a pound. Aus thought it would take the farmers several years to regain what they had lost over the past three years, but such conditions also meant that this was a good time to buy land at half price. He felt that prospects for day laborers had not improved. The Scandinavian migration was almost at a standstill and the churches were really struggling.<sup>9</sup>

G. M. Opsund, secretary of the Farmers' Club at Silverton, wrote to the *Decorah Posten*, April 23, 1897, and summarized the changes in the economic conditions in Oregon from 1891 to the present. He recognized that the hard times made some people most willing to discount any glory that Oregon should be entitled to. After describing the various possible farming endeavors, he summarized by indicating that the present was a much better time for investment than the past four or five years, and for those who wanted to live on their capital, Oregon was much cheaper than "the East". The reasons for this were that fuel and fruit were cheaper and the climate milder. Opsund did not want to advise people to come because he knew that the work force was yet greater than the demand since manufacturing was very limited in this area. Shoes, plows, wagons, harrows, even grub hoes, had to come from "the East". He offered the suggestion that those with capital and technical knowledge might start a factory. Opsund also advised that any move not be made in fall or winter because the abrupt change from the dry cold to this damp climate might bring harmful physical effects. Those who were thinking about Oregon and wanting more information might write the secretary of the Farmers' Club and then their inquiries would be discussed at the club's meeting. In that way, the opinions offered would be those of several, not just one person. If more information were needed, *Page Eighteen* he thought perhaps the *Decorah Posten* could help the club in providing space for answering.<sup>10</sup>



### *Footnotes*

1. *Amerika*, Aug. 9, 1893.
2. *Decorah Posten*, Dec. 3, 1893.
3. *Decorah Posten*, Jan. 1, 1895.
4. *Decorah Posten*, Jan. 11, 1895.
5. *Decorah Posten*, Dec. 20, 1895.
6. *Pacific Herald*, Dec. 1895.
7. *Decorah Posten*. May 13, 1896.
8. *Decorah Posten*. Jan. 8, 1897.
9. *Decorah Posten*, Jan. 1, 1897.
10. *Decorah Posten*, April 23, 1897.

## CHAPTER IV THEY SETTLED IN

And they went to work. For the majority of the Scandinavians this meant farming, usually on a much smaller acreage than they had had in the Middle West. An interview question directed to members of these families brought the response that at least seventy five percent of their families had engaged almost exclusively in farming before they came to Silverton, and this had been primarily with grain and corn. The majority began in Oregon with grain farming, but some in time diversified. The raising of hops and development of fruit orchards became new experiences for these farmers; of them, G. G. Evens, Albert Olsen, and Albert Sather were three well known pioneer hop farmers.

Several of the early arrivals had to work especially hard to clear their land of timber. Opstad and Tingelstad were two of them: however, Tingelstad's experience of seven years in the Wisconsin pineries proved valuable. With the assistance of his blacksmith friend, A.O. Steelhammer, he invented a grubbing machine out of old binder parts and found this to be a most useful tool. Edvin Tingelstad wrote about it:

By anchoring it to a stump, putting a chain on the stump to be grubbed, running the cable thru a pulley attached to the stump, the machine was able to put tremendous strain on the stump or whatever object one wanted to move. The grubbing machine was operated by two cranks and was mounted on heavy, wooden wheels so one man could move it from one to another place. It had all kinds of uses- to lift heavy sills to the top of the posts when

building the old-fashioned barns, topuli stalled threshing engines out of the mud and even to hoist the present Trinity church bell into the tower of old Trinity church. I recall that the bell weighed 1010 pounds and that it was manufactured, in St. Louis, I believe.

On Tingelstad's 140 acres, 15 had been grubbed when purchased in 1892, but the stumps had not been removed. Further, the hazel brush and oak grubs had to be cleared before the ground could be broken and seeded. In the next nineteen years about seventy-five more acres were grubbed, some every winter. In the very earliest days, some of the saw timber on part of the farm had been logged with oxen. These preparations for farming were surely quite different from the work of readying the soil on the homestead developed at Hickson, North Dakota, in the 1880's.<sup>1</sup>

Before grubbing, some of the farmers would first put a flock of goats on the land in order to kill the underbrush. Edvin Tingelstad wrote:

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They would eat nothing but leaves and twigs and stood on their hind legs to reach as high as possible. All the care they needed was to have their hooves trimmed and be supplied with salt. They were fun to have but hard to fence in. A little roof on top of a big log was all the shelter they ever had, We divided the pasture into two parcels of 40 acres or so and would switch the goats from one parcel to the other until they eventually had cleared up the hazel brush and oak grubs. Then we sold them. I had learned to shear the goats. The mohair was quite valuable, so the goats eventually paid for themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Prune orchards became quite common as farming methods changed. Early in 1892, Axel Taw had an orchard; later J.P. Larsen developed an orchard, as well as cultivated hops. M. J. Madsen became known for being the first vegetable seed grower in western Oregon. And dairying became another kind of farming to be developed later, Charles Palmquist being one early dairy farmer.

Concern for fresh fish, such as they no doubt were accustomed to from the Scandinavian countries, on occasion urged the farmers to drive to the coast to come back with a wagon load of fish. One report indicated that the trip might take at least a week. Besides for food, one farmer used some fresh salmon for fertilization of his fruit trees.

The lack of adequate roads shows up quite frequently in descriptions of those early days, which was especially a problem for farmers. Sometimes it was their initiative that helped to make a passable road, such as the one from the Silverton cemetery to Paradise Alley. Furthermore, mud in their barnyards sometimes was almost knee deep, and caused difficulties. One ingenious youth used his homemade stilts for getting through the barnyard while he did his daily chores, as well as for his boyhood pleasures.

That same person recalled that there seemed to have been much more wind and rain in those days. Some of the bad storms would knock down the second growth timber. Sometimes there was too much rain in the summer so that the hay would rot; then in October it could become so dry that there was only enough water in the wells to supply the house. The horses and cows had to be watered in Brush Creek or Silver Creek and the farmers complained because it was too dry to plow.<sup>3</sup>

A. I. Aus's *Decorah Posten* letter of Jan. 11, 1895, besides discussing the weather and other concerns of the Oregon Scandinavians, contrasts some methods of farming from those used in the East:

... if one wants a wind break here, he must plant it on the south side. In farming there is something that is different from the Minnesota methods. For seeding wheat and oats one has to sprinkle the grain with vitriol to keep from getting smut, and most of the farmers have a real granary, but at threshing time they go to an elevator man and borrow as many sacks as needed; these are filled in the field and then taken to the elevator to sell or store free until the following June. Because of this you can hardly buy wheat or oats from the farmers, and if you do, you pay seven cents over the market price both for wheat or barley. The soil, especially the black soil, is much heavier to work than in Minnesota, and this may be a good thing since we have little frost to loosen the soil, so they seldom need to rotate the soil with clover and other grasses, and here are many farms that have been worked over forty years, and some have never had a blade of grass seeded, and all the weeds and such have been controlled.

Of the different kinds of nuisances we have also a good sample, and Oregon can in this respect hardly compare with the oldest settlements in Minnesota. First and foremost, we have "wild oats" and that in such a *Page Twenty-one* profusion that it is overwhelming. The farmer never cleans his wheat for market, but each elevator or mill has its own fanning mill so that wheat goes through it and the farmer gets the screened wild oats back and most elevators also have a feed mill so the farmer, if he wishes, can get his screening ground into feed ... And here also we have another weed called French Pink, a very beautiful flower in different colors; in the East you would find it in the flower garden where it goes under the name of bachelor button; ... and not much of pigeon grass, but we are well supplied with Canada thistle and with tassels and wild peas...<sup>4</sup>

Further description of farming methods and results were detailed In G. M. Opsund's letter representing the Silverton Farmers' Club:

Now since farming here in the Northwestern States is very different from farming in the East, we shall give a short description of the way the Norwegian farmers have carried on in farming here: This is the way we have done it here. "Clearing" of land is expensive, costing from \$10-50 per acre. But the land is covered with trees and shrubs. It is done in this way. It is chopped down, preferably in June, burned in August and seeded to grass in October. For the next year one puts goats out there which eat the young growth. After a time of five to six years the stumps will be easy to move. The goats are, therefore, a useful domestic animal since the wool is a higher price than that of sheep ... Summer plowing is necessary, but the most important is to plant the land with potatoes or corn, especially the latter, to be put in a silo; but the best restoration for old land is to seed it with clover ... It pays to raise chickens as well as anything if one takes good care of them. The same is true of fruit crops, especially prunes, because it is a known fact that Oregon prunes are as good as any prunes on the

market ... And anyone who wants to research the truth of that statement can find it in an agricultural report or write to the Agriculture Department In Washington.

Opsund said it paid to keep some sheep, depending upon the size of the farm while cattle raising was less profitable. "Sugar beets" could be considered. No creamery had yet come into Silverton.<sup>5</sup>

Efforts of Marion County farmers, including these Scandinavian settlers, showed evidence of really diligent work, in that the state rankings of 1900 rated the country first in oat production (1,059,220 bushels), third in wheat (1,094,150 bushels) fourth in corn (19,780 bushels), fourteenth in barley (24,910 bushels), second in dairy produce (\$227,050), tenth in orchard products (\$32,683) and second in poultry (\$49,612).<sup>6</sup>

Some of the early Scandinavians combined their farming with other occupations. A few of these included M. G. Gunderson who raised registered Jersey cattle and Poland China hogs, but was also in banking and other community business; Halvor Halvorsen was a builder as well as a farmer; S. H. Lima farmed but also was president of the Lima Flouring Mill; A G. Steelhammer farmed 26 acres, but was especially known as the blacksmith; P. K. Johnson was a carpenter as well as a hop grower; K. Funrue had a small farm but worked also at a nursery. Examples of occupations of other early settlers were Hans Steen, a plasterer and stone mason; Andrew Towe and Jacob Nerison mill workers; Ole Satern worker in the Simon Benson logging area as well as Silverton, and A. G. Anderson, the hotel owner.



**THE JULIUS ALM STORE**

The earliest Scandinavian merchants seem to have been the Storaasli brothers. In 1893 issues of the *Silverton Appeal*, they advertised low prices for a "full line of general merchandise". A well known name in Silverton's merchandizing history is that of Julius Alm, the Norwegian whose mercantile experience began as a small boy working in his uncle's store in Oslo. When he thought he was old enough to *Page Twenty-three* start for America, he left Norway. The story he told his family is that he came riding on a pork barrel and with

only ten dollars in his pocket. His ability to learn adequate English in six months helped him in his first clerking job in Fargo. From there he went to Sheldon, North Dakota, where he farmed until he was burned out. Knowing one Norwegian transplant, Ole Dahl, in Silverton, he set out for Silverton where he obtained a job as a clerk in Wotlard's store. This meant he could send for his wife and leave the depression and less desirable weather of Dakota behind, he thought. By 1903 Alm had acquired financial resources enough to open his own store:

In a little while I had saved enough money to start a store of my own. Not much then, but it was something to begin with. My customers used to come in ox-drawn wagons, and women would come on horseback. In those days the roads were very bad; you could hardly drive an empty wagon through the streets in winter, without it getting mired down.<sup>7</sup>

In an interview, Alm recalled some of his early struggles. Besides waiting on an occasional customer all clerks had to keep their weather eye out to stop stray cows from snatching a cabbage or a carrot from the front door supply while they were not looking. His days were long, from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., not allowing much time for home life. The children also helped in the store. It became a recognized institution, in time, for the whole community, not just for the Scandinavian population.

Alm had learned German and this meant that he was able to serve the German-speaking community also around Silverton. His advertisements in the *Silverton Appeal* often carried this footnote: "Scandinavisk Taler; Wir sprechen Deutsch." His advertisements also included special reminders of Scandinavian foods: Fiskerbøller, 17c a can at Julius Alm's; Smoked and salt herring, large supply, at Julius Alm's. His daughter, Bertha Alm, reported that one year when Silverton had a population of 2500, her father supplied the town with the equivalent of one-half pound of lutefisk for each person. Lutefisk became more than a Scandinavian delicacy then. Silverton merchants provided the groceries for the nearby logging camps. This meant deliveries by horse and buggy, and sometimes Alm could tell tall stories about those delivery trips!

Also supplying the loggers was another Scandinavian merchant, B. R. Bentson, who came a few years later from Garretson, South Dakota. In the community of Monitor, Knut Gregersen was an early merchant. Another place, Nels Digerness's store in Silverton, became a social center for many of the Scandinavians. His Norwegian friends are well memorialized in the sketch by his brother Knut Digerness which shows those men in later years gathered around the pot-bellied stove to discuss politics, fanning, and religion. Expressing one of the less serious concerns which those merchants had to meet, Bent Tingelstad in a reported interview said:

We Norwegians really did one marvelous thing for Silverton ... We brought loaf sugar to town. When we first came here we couldn't buy loaf sugar anywhere at Silverton. We didn't have any automobiles to hop into to run to Portland or Salem after anything we lacked. So we taught the local merchants they must carry loaf sugar (cubed sugar). Whoever heard of a group of Norwegians drinking coffee without "klumpe sukker"? In those first few years after Trinity congregation was organized the Norwegians came into Silverton thick and fast - and so did the loaf sugar.<sup>8</sup>

Wages were very low in the 1890's. Theodore Opsund reported that seventy-five cents a day for cutting cord wood was above average; fifty cents was the average, *Page Twenty-Four* and \$1.00 a top wage in the early 90's. When his father came to town, Casper Towe said that he received \$2.00 a day for his work a fair enough income to provide for his family. 10 One farmer's account book shows that he paid a fellow Norwegian in 1896 for 7¼ days of carpenter work \$9.35. and that he, himself, sowed, plowed, and harvested for two days and three hours for the same neighbor for \$6.75 in 1906. In 1896 there was a cash outlay of \$482.75 for supplies and the labor of several neighbors in the building of a two dory house, still a Landmark in the Silverton countryside.<sup>9</sup>

## Footnotes

1. Edvin Tingelstad. *Memoirs* (Corvallis, Or., 1973), p. 4-6.
2. Ibid., p.10
3. Ibid., p.10
4. *Decorah Posten*, Jan. 11, 1895.
5. Ibid., April 23, 1897.
6. Lon L. Swift, "Land Tenure in Oregon," (*Oregon Historical Quarterly*) 10 no. 2 (March 1942)
7. Works Progress Administration, *Ethnic Groups interviews*. Series 1 (Julius Alm) (Salem, Or.: State Library, 1937) Box 63.; Robert C. Clark. *History of the Willamette Valley, Oregon*. (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Pub. Co., 1927) v.3, p.330.
8. Lithe Madsen, *Oregon Statesman*, 1932 (as quoted in *Pacific Lutheran Herald*) April 20, 1932.
9. Interview with Caspar Towe, Silverton, Or., 7 Oct. 1977; interview with Theodore Opsund, Portland, Or., 14 Nov. 1977.

## CHAPTER V THE CHURCH – A FIRST PRIORITY

On June 6, 1892, six months after Ingebret Larsen arrived from Mayville, North Dakota, a small band of Scandinavians gathered in his Silverton west hill home to discuss the organization of a church. This meeting was the direct result of the Reverend Mr. Bjug Harstad's earlier visit to Silverton. Larsen invited the heads of the households of the several Scandinavian families who had recently come to Silverton to this meeting. Here they reached the decision to organize a church to be called the Silverton Skandinaviske Evangeliske Lutherake Menighet (Silverton Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church) a name retained until 1917 when it adopted the name, Trinity Lutheran Church. The families of Ingebret Larsen, Henry Kloster, A. A. Svaren, John Sateren, A. G. Molden, Lars Opstad, and Bent Tingelstad within the next few weeks signed on as charter members. Pastor A.O. Dolven from Portland had been asked to assist them in organization and later to serve them on occasion until a resident pastor could be obtained. Pastor Harstad also made several trips to Silverton from Parkland, Washington, during the first two years and conducted services while there. During the first year the Reverend Mr. V. Koren, President of the Iowa District of the Norwegian Synod and the Reverend Mr. O. Grønsberg of San Francisco also visited them and preached.<sup>1</sup> At the June 6th meeting, Ingebret Larsen had been elected president of the congregation: H. Kloster, secretary; and John Sateren, trustee.

On Sunday afternoon, Sept. 11, 1892, after services at the home of John Sateren, the congregation decided to erect a church building. Meeting at the Tingelstad home, Jan. 31. 1893, the congregation elected Larsen to solicit subscriptions in Silverton and vicinity for the church building. At the same meeting they asked for Pastor Dolven's services, if his Portland congregation would allow him to serve them as regularly as possible in a temporary position. They made their plea on behalf of this very small group of Scandinavians and also expressed their concern for the development of a congregation: "Sound this be neglected, then the Lutheran people now residing here (and others expected to arrive) will be left to themselves or be prey to the various sects prevalent".

The congregational meeting of March 9, 1893 discussed the calling of a pastor. After a decision was reached to extend the call to the Reverend Mr. N. Pedersen of Bode, Iowa, the following letter was sent to him:<sup>2</sup>

The congregation is newly organized and the membership small and thus it will be difficult at present to support a permanent pastor. But, humanly speaking, it is very likely to grow in the near future, and as the immigration from the Midwest states has been steady and indications are that it will continue:

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Therefore we thought that if it is possible for you to come alone at present and stay an indefinite period of time. It would be easier for you to judge the situation and should you find this to be unsatisfactory, you are free to choose a more favorable place. However, we hope, should you decide to come, that your stay among us will be as long as the Lord grants you life.

As to salary for a pastor, the situation is the same here as elsewhere on earth. Some are poor, others are rich. However, we believe that all will be willing to contribute according to their financial ability, so that the pastor will be spared any anxiety as to daily bread.

Should you decide to come we do hope (though not personally acquainted) that you will be received with open arms and hearts, and accepted in friendship, honor and love.

On behalf of the congregation,

Yours in Christ,

B. Tingelstad, H. Kloster

P.S. An early reply is requested.

In the earliest days the congregation met in member homes and also in the old red school house, the GAR hall, and the Methodist and Christian churches, O.A. Tingelstad at the 50th anniversary celebration of the congregation recalled one of the first meetings in his parents' home in Brush Creek. At that meeting the dining table, plus Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, served in combination as the pulpit for the Sunday service.

By the June 15, 1893, meeting of the church, the original plans for the building were augmented and four feet added to its length to make it: 52 x 32 ft.; 18 ft. in height, and with a 10 x 10 base and 85 ft. tower. It was also announced that \$113 had been subscribed towards the pastor's salary. By the July 22 meeting, \$830 had been subscribed for the building and \$113 promised for the pastor. Bent Tingelstad offered one half an acre for a cemetery.

Pastor Pedersen arrived in July, 1893, and preached his initial sermon on July 22nd. Since no parsonage was provided, he rented a house for a few weeks and then began building his own, after first clearing the land of timber. The Pedersen family arrived a few months later.

Bjug Harstad, then president of the Pacific District of the Norwegian Synod. laid the cornerstone for the church, Oct. 29, 1893. The following documents were placed in the cornerstone: New Testament, Luther's Small Catechism, constitution and history of the congregation, copies of *Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende*, *Lutheran University Herald*, Luther College catalog, *Silverton Appeal* and *Børne Bladet*, and a few coins. The following families were admitted to membership shortly after: M.G. Storaasli, O. O. Storaasli, A. G. Anderson, O. Olson, A. O. Lindflatt, I. Kvaslerud, Henry Hage, Gullick Gullicksen, Mrs. Signe Storaasli, Else and Tilla Storaasli, and Mrs. Julia S. Johnson.<sup>3</sup>

According to Article Six of the Constitution all church services and pastoral acts were to be carried out in accordance with the Norwegian church ritual of 1685 and the altar book of 1688, although these rules could be modified by congregational approval. All services were to be conducted in the Norwegian language. Other major decisions were also made. One was to affiliate the congregation with the national Lutheran church organization of the Norwegian Synod. The articles of incorporation were drawn up and signed by N. Pedersen, A. A. Svaren, Lan Opstad, and John Sateren in the presence of T. W. Davenport, notary public, Jan. 26, 1894. At that time Pastor Pedersen was president of the congregation, M.G. Storaasli, secretary, and Bent Tingelstad, treasurer. Knut Jensen was requested to be "kirkesanger" (song leader) *Page Twenty-seven* a position to which he was regularly elected for many years. A. O. Lindflatt was the first trustee and Axel Tau the custodian. In December a stove had been purchased, and it became the custodian's responsibility to see that members brought wood for use in it. The congregation decided to take up a subscription towards the pastor's salary for a year. Each trustee was given a list of names to contact. The subscriptions should be paid monthly if possible. At one meeting the members decided that each voting member should pay the sum of twenty-five cents toward the purchase of wafers and wine for communion and the pastor should be responsible for securing them. The financial concern of this young congregation was recorded in the report for 1894. Receipts were \$1140 and disbursements \$1139.48. Of the receipts, however, \$500 was a loan for which \$50 was paid in interest; \$173.80 had not been paid on the old pledges nor \$130 collected on the new subscriptions. The pastor was to be paid also by subscription for his summer parochial school teaching. If more was subscribed than needed, the remainder should be given to the pastor.<sup>4</sup>

Sixteen months after his arrival, Pastor Pedersen was extended a formal letter of call to the congregation. A letter from the Rev. Mr. Erik Ballestad, Tacoma, Washington, in the *Lutheran University Herald*, Dec. 23, 1894, tells of a visit to Silverton and of the reception that day for Pastor Pedersen and family.

Monday morning I went further south through the beautiful Willamette Valley ... About noon I came to the much talked about Silverton that appears to be a gathering place for the Scandinavian farmers on the coast.



The first thing that my eyes fell upon was the big new church whose spire lifted high into heaven reminds us to look up to Him who is the giver of all good gifts.

After having visited O. O. Storaasli, we met Pastor Pedersen who has an acreage of about 8 acres of very good land. He has also raised a not so little house that is not quite ready. The pastor, although as far as I know, is not a carpenter, has done much of the work and also built his own outhouse. Yes, not only that but he has also grubbed much of his land that he has planted with prune trees. But what particularly attracts the attention of the visitor is the fascinating view from the parsonage. First, is the beautiful Willamette Valley, then in the west the coast mountains and in the east the Cascade mountains with the beautiful snow decked tops and especially Mt. Hood, St. Helens, Adams, and in the background lording it over all is Washington's pride. Mt. Tacoma, all that on a clear day can be seen from Pastor Pedersen's home. Wednesday forenoon we gathered in the church for a service There were at least a hundred people there. But when the service was over Pastor Pedersen was very surprised because the people were in such a hurry that day to leave. But the pastor still didn't understand that there was something going on that he was not to know about... The house had been taken over by the congregation's men and women and the latter had brought with them food baskets. And when the wife came home to fix a meal for her large family she found the house full of people and a long table with all kinds of delicious food. Soon after I. Larsen came driving and brought Pastor Pedersen with him who still didn't understand until he saw the house filled to overflowing ... Soon we were sitting at the well decked table ... When all were satisfied, I. Larsen stepped forward and made a few heartfelt words. He explained the occasion, to show the congregation's regard for the pastor and presented him with a purse of twenty-five dollars and seventy-five cents that he should use to complete his house as far as it would go. Pastor Pedersen thanked them heartily for the gift ... such recognition would give him the spirit and the strength to continue the work as long as it was God's will that they should work together ... <sup>5</sup>

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After the congregational meeting the following day, they issued a formal letter of call and announced purchase of land for a cemetery.

By the end of 1895, family names added to the church roles included those of Ole Satern, Axel Tau, Knut Jensen, Annie C. Rovelstad, Thrond Ulsager, Gunder Winger, Andrew Torgerson, and Chris Hanson; and the following in 1897: G. G. Evens, H. G. Hansen, O. L. Hatteberg, and P. L. Goplerud.

From 1892-95 baptisms recorded:

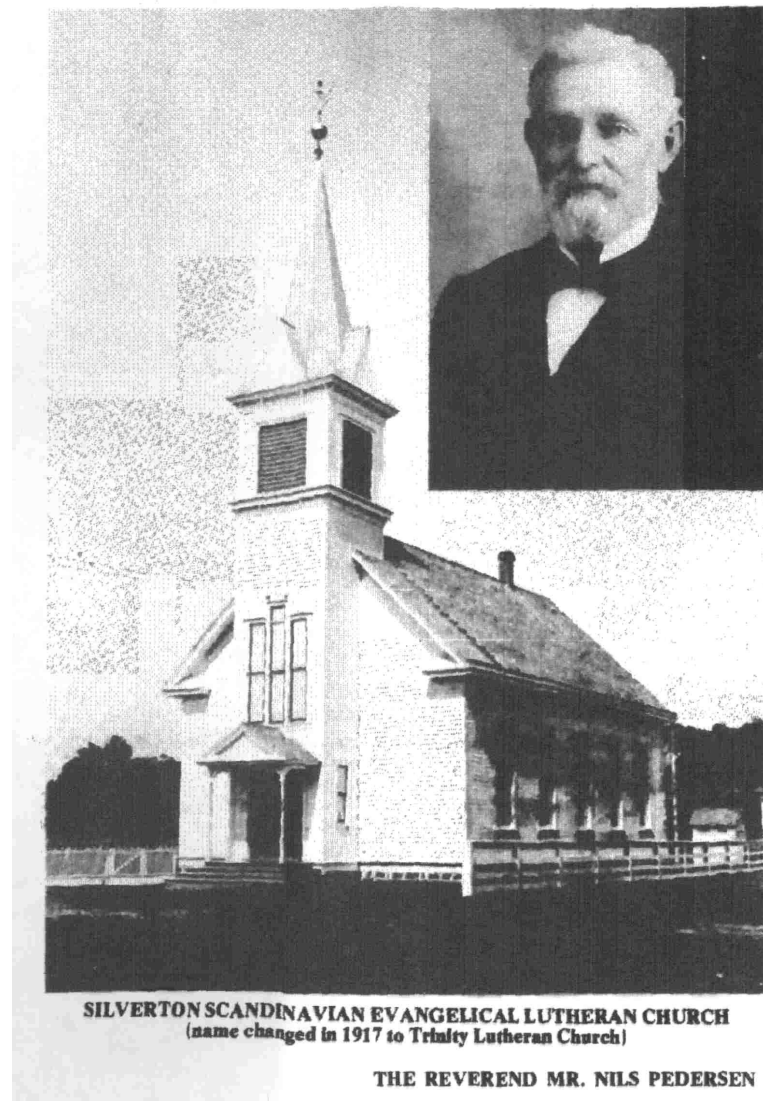
Martin Larsen, Henry Christian Sweeten, Ida Storaasli, Wilhelm Theodor Storaasli, Marie Knutsen, Otto Melvin Opatad, Bernt Arvid Hage, Minnie Caroline Sweeren, Alma Olsen, Christian Alm, Erita V. Guisnes, Clara Emilie Storaasli, Chester Oscar Olsen, Carl Ludwig Hanson (Franklin, Ore.), Berthe Marie Jacobsen (Franklin, Ore.), Emil Larsen, Emma Margrethe Christofferson, Aloise Elizabeth Kloster, Nora Amalis Tau, Morritts Alois Gottwold, Oscar Satern.

The church registry also lists the following deaths: 1894, Jakob Ass, Gustav Johnson, Berthea Marie Storaasli, Karoline S. Higdensbraaten. Enok Naesseth. <sup>6</sup>

Throughout his years of service in Silverton, Pastor Pedersen occasionally extended his missionary efforts into neighboring communities. He made tedious journeys to assist fellow Scandinavians in Franklin, Eugene, Albany, McMinnville, Harrisburg, and Champoege.

The first organization, as is to be expected. the Ladies Aid - the "Norske Kvindeforening" - composed primarily of the older women of the congregation, was organized July 1893, the month Pastor Pedersen arrived in Silverton. There were ten charter members: Mrs. N. Pedersen, Mrs. Ingebret Larsen, Mrs. Ivar Larsen, Mrs. Lars Opstad, Mrs. B. Tingelstad, Mrs. A. G. Molden, Mrs. A. A. Svaren, Mrs. Albert Olsen, Mrs. B. Storlie, and Mrs. Henry Kloster. During the first years the society met in private homes, usually the first Wednesday of every month. Their purpose was to work for home and foreign missions. Dues were ten cents a month. They spoke and wrote their records, of course, in Norwegian. The constitution included such a detail as that the prescribed refreshments should be only bread and butter, sauce and coffee. Pastor and

Mrs. Pedersen attended to all the official duties of the organization, and in spite of a small membership the Kvindeforening ably assisted in the work of the congregation.



Everyone came by horse and buggy to the meetings, and no one stayed home unless for some unusual circumstances. Writing the society's history, Martha Isaacson related:

Most of our people had settled out around in the country so there were sometimes several miles to drive to the place of meeting. In the summer time the hour set for the meeting was 2 o'clock in the afternoon. But as the wintertime when the days were short, the members met at the noon hour. The old-fashioned duster was quite in style in those days, and to good advantage. It was worn over whatever other wrap one had on, for in winter time the mud was deep and splattered easily, and in summertime the dust was very deep. If one were acquainted with the Oregon soil in this locality, one would know by the color of the duster from whence each arrival came. If it was gray or white colored, she came from the Howell Prairie or some other wide expanse of the valley, but if brick colored, she came from the hills or one of the smaller valleys nestling among the hills. There was a feeling of kinship among those first pioneers of the church as they greeted each other at their gatherings. When "kaffetid" (coffee time) arrived the hostess would set the family table, and it was as one family with perfect understanding that they all gathered around it.<sup>7</sup>



**NORSKE KVINDEFORENING (Ladies Aid of the Silvertown Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church) at the O.J. Langsev home**

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Furthermore, these people did not neglect the religious education of the children. In the very early days there was no Sunday school, but there was a Saturday school. Then in October 1894, the congregation decided to ask the pastor to conduct a religious school one day a week, his compensation was to be \$1.50 a day. For the summer school in 1895 he received a salary of \$13.50. Edwin Tingelstad recalled that Pastor Pedersen very often on Sunday morning lined the young people up in the aisle of the church and quizzed them in front of their parents and "that was no fun ... We had to learn the answers to Bible passages in the *Forklaring* (Pontoppidan's explanation for Luther's Small Catechism) by heart and also the Bible stories in *Bibel Historien* (Bible History) The hymn book and the New Testament were also instructional materials.

From the publication for the Golden Jubilee of Trinity:

Saturday school was an all day session for the children of some families, as the classes for older children were held in the forenoon, while the younger waited until the afternoon for instruction. With the slow means of transportation, it often meant coming home after dark for those who lived some distance from the church. With very few exceptions, all instruction was in the Norwegian language.<sup>8</sup>

Attempts to have the Saturday school changed to Sunday school did not succeed; for many years, however, a month of school was held each summer with classes being held from 9 to 4, including the usual recess and noon periods. The pastor had charge of instruction in the Saturday school and often taught the summer school also. Sometimes some members of the congregation would teach during the summer session. Several times two teachers were needed for the summer school because there were too many pupils for one person to teach.

The confirmands at the Scandinavian Church to 1900 were the following;

1894: Walter S. Pedersen, Gullick H. Gullicksen, Hans Jensen, Ole Halvorsen, Karl Gustav Olsen, Christine Larsen, Alice Storaasli, Ida Caroline Larsen, Lovise G. Pedersen.

1895: George Storaasli, George Anderson. Lars John Jensen, Clara Marie Ulsaker. Anna Matilda Swan, Julian Lovise Langsev, Ida Caroline Pedersen.

1896: none

1897: S. Anthonius Foss, Carl A. Bensen, Oscar A. Tingelstad, Svend L. Olsen, Knut G. Ulsaker, Nels Olsen, Bernt Jensen, Mathilda A. Foss.

1898: Martin A. Andersen, Oscar I. Olsen, Nels Gustav Langsev, Herman T. Jorgensen, Johane M. Winger, Clara T. Evens, Mine Olave Olsen, Anna Marie Jensen, Anna L. Molden, Clara A. Gullicksen, Martha Jensen, Della A. Andersen.

1899: none

1900: Adolf W. Pedersen, Johan A. Hesjedal, Martin T. Tingelstad. Clara I. Molden. Ella O. Winger. Louisa Tvedt, Annie B. Hatteberg, Ida Gurine Olsen, Anna M. Hesjedal, Ida M. Lien, Marie Jensen.<sup>9</sup>

In 1901, the congregation organized the Young People's Christian Society of the Silverton's Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Marion County, Oregon, opening the membership to their own confirmed members and also to confirmed Lutheran youth who did not belong to any other congregation. The entry fee was 25 cents, with an additional 10 cents assessed at each monthly meeting as dues. The pastor was the ex-officio president. The young people arranged lengthy and diverse programs similar to the following:

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April 10, 1904 meeting program: Reading, "A Brave Act", Marie Jensen; organ solo, Sophie Goplerud; recitation, "Lille Nora og hendes Bibel", Martin Tingelstad; reading, "Saved by a Song", Nettie Bensen; song by the quartet; vocal duet, Marie and Thea Jensen; a short discussion, "Existence of the Human Soul", Rev. Pedersen.

May 1, 1904 program: Reading, "Christmas Present for the Heathens", Thea Jensen; vocal duet, Ida Pedersen and Martha Jensen; recitation, "Sweet Comfort", Ella Hemmingson; essay, "Influence of Bad Company". Lars Jensen; essay, "Influence of Good Company", Carl Bensen; reading, "A Good Daughter", Marie Tingelstad; song, the quartet.

Feb. 5, 1905 program: song, male quartet; recitation, "The Three Lessons", Marie Jensen; reading, "Tabt et Hjem", Martin Tingelstad; organ solo, Sophie Goplerud; essay, "Glimpse of Nature", Carl Bensen; song, Flora Larson; essay, "Life's Worthiness", Tillie Foss; reading, "Lend a Hand", Alvin Hemmingsen; reading, "Spring of Happiness", Lars Jensen; song, male quartet.

The minutes also show the young people's serious attitude to their organization's purpose and projects. For example: They paid \$67.84 on the church bell; appointed a special committee for Fourth of July celebration arrangements; donated toward the purchase of an organ; contributed to the electric light fund; decided to have the Scripture study in English at least for one month; bought English hymn books; decided to solicit money for the organist's salary; appointed one member to pump the bellows of the organ each Sunday for six months; provided each member with a copy of Roberts' Rules of Order; promised \$100 toward the building of the school house; sent condolence messages when there were deaths in their families, and provided flowery well wishes for their friends who married:

Whereas it has pleased the God of love to bind together the hearts and souls of two of our members, and caused them to be united in the holy bonds of matrimony that they may walk together thru the journey of life: share each other's joys; bear each other's sorrow; and be each other's comfort in adversity as in prosperity, and Whereas said parties, Mr. & Mrs. A. A. Molden have been active members of our Y.P.S., are in very esteem as friends of said Society, and ever will remain, as we hope, faithful to our courage, and appreciative of our work, be It Resolved that we the Y.P.S. extend our congratulations and express our good wishes hoping that He who clothes the lillies and makes the sparrow fall, will guide the new married couple and lead them safe thru all. And be it further Resolved that these resolutions be read at the wedding and also be recorded in the minutes of our Society.<sup>10</sup>

The magnitude of such an event in the lives of the young people must not be overlooked. The church records show only a few weddings had been performed before 1900. They were:<sup>11</sup>

Andy C. Hove and Manth Kjerland, Sept. 6, 1893  
Hans H. Meidel and Elizabeth Olsen, April 29, 1894.  
Simon O. Bergsen and Johanna Iverson, Oct. 6, 1895.  
Martin Bensen and Belle Gundersen, Sept. 27, 1896 (at Sodaville, Oregon).  
Carl Carlson and Josephine A. Nelson, Dec. 29, 1896 (at Shedd, Oregon)

A concern of lesser importance but apparently thought to need serious parliamentary consideration appears in a letter from one of the younger members to his older brother in school at Pacific Lutheran Academy:

*Page Thirty-three*

Program was first rendered ... Then much talking was done about trimming the church. The color to use was voted upon, 3 being in favor of red and green and 16 being in favor of red alone. The 15 included me. The 36 yards of carpet is to be got, also some gold braid, fringe and tassels. We decided to let Pedersen buy all this stuff and tend to getting it here. I think we will have to go in debt \$15 possibly \$20. Bum! ... Then L.H.M. introduced the subject of having a Christmas tree. It was decided to have one 2nd day Christmas at 1 p.m. Of course we will have blankets over the windows and have candles on the tree. The following committee was appointed ...<sup>12</sup>

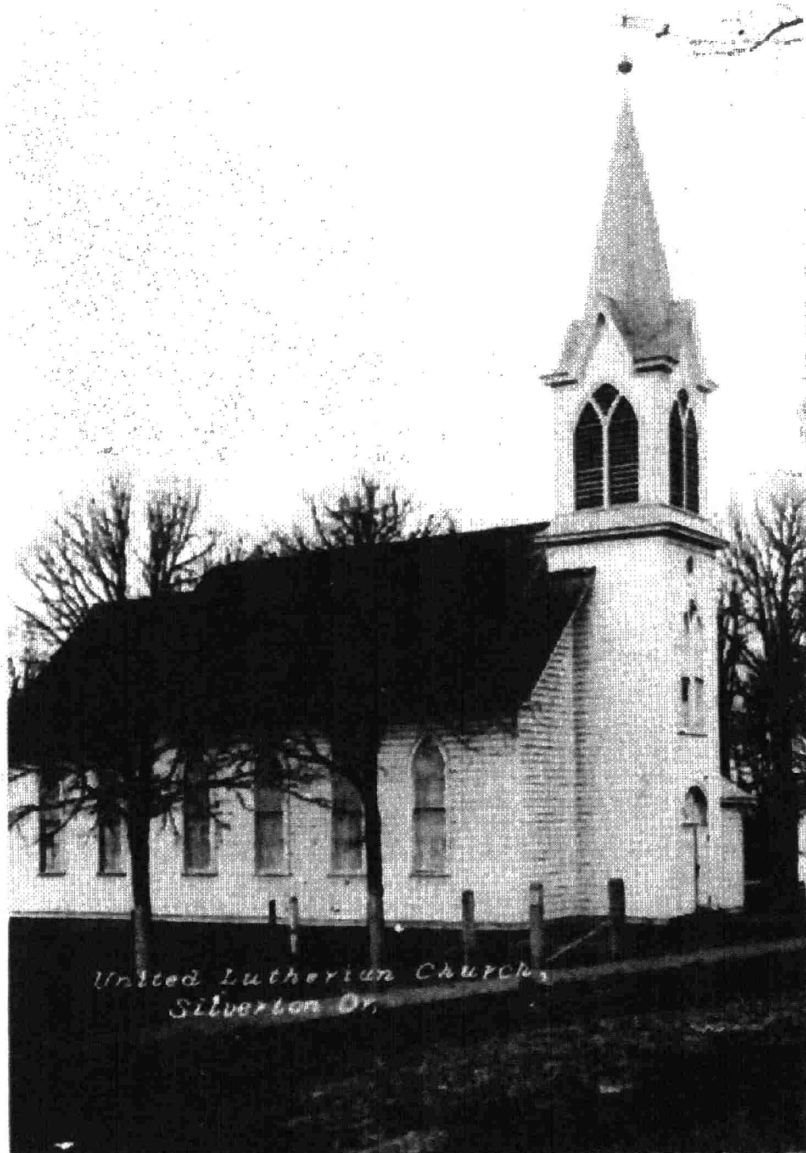
The young people also initiated special programs, such as for the 17th of May, at which the congregation's members and others from the community participated. One such festive occasion included a talk in Norwegian by the pastor, another talk on the history of Norway, a number by the choir, and then a fellowship time. The offering of \$33 added considerably to their fund for a bell, to be hung in the church tower.

The story of the organization of St John's Skandinavisk Evangellsk Lutherske Menighet (St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church changed to Immanuel Lutheran Church in 1927) is similar to that of the Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church. Some early arrivals, such as K Funrue who came in 1892 after eighteen years in Petersburg, Nebraska, became very serious in their efforts to gather Norwegians who were interested in starting a second congregation. On November 10, 1892, only a few months after the other church had been started, the following ten families became the charter members for St. John's: Gustav Johnson, J. H. Johnson, Ole Eide, K. Funrue, P J. Johnson, Hans Johnson, Oluf Olsen, C. Christenson, Marcus Christenson, and Ole Vold. In all there were forty two persons. This congregation decided to become a member of the national Lutheran Church known as the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America (or United Church) which was not in complete agreement with the Norwegian Synod in all doctrinal and practical affairs of the church.

For the first two years, the Rev. Mr. O.R. Sletten who came to them from La Centre, Washington served this congregation then the Rev. C. M. Nodtvedt of Westby, Wisconsin, succeeded him in 1896 and remained until 1901. During the interim between the two pastors, Rev, Mr. N. J. Ellestad of Portland conducted services every fourth Sunday, By the end of 1895 the following families had joined: Anna Johnson; John Anderson; Selma Storaasli, Henrietta and Truman Storaasli; Paul Dulum; Gunder M. Opsund; Edmund Olson; Anna Johnson; and John Anderson.

The congregation met in the Flint Christian Church for the first six years; then they decided to build on a lot which the Ladies Aid had purchased. The cornerstone was laid by the Rev. Mr. G. Hoyme, President of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, August 9, 1898. By this time the exterior of the church had been completed and painted, and the entire cost of \$589.15, with the exception of \$22.15, had been paid. 13 Ladies of this church too found it important to organize themselves early, their first meeting being held at the parsonage in December of 1892. Five women were present - including Mrs. Gust Johnson, elected president: Mrs. K. Funrue, secretary; Mrs. O. R. Sletten, treasurer; Mrs. Edmund Olson, and Mrs. Paulson. Mr. Punt-Funrue presided at the first meeting in the absence of the pastor. Each member gave twenty-five cents that day, but future dues were to be ten cents a meeting. This small group busied itself with sewing, knitting, and other handcrafts, and made plans for a dinner and a bazaar. Income was divided with one-third to foreign

missions and two-thirds for home mission work. These women through their dedication and ambition were able to purchase the lot for the proposed church. As with the Scandinavian Church women, these ladies had transportation difficulties in getting to the meetings held in the members' homes. Sometimes they might need to travel as much as four miles, and not always were their farmer husbands free to take them in their lumber wagon. Likewise, both groups used the Norwegian language in their societies and continued to keep their records in this fashion until the time for reorganization in the 1940's.



**ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
(name changed in 1927 to Immanuel Lutheran Church)

Pastor Sletten organized a choir in the spring of 1893, which rehearsed in the homes of members who had organs, since the congregation was without a building. The first choir members included: Ida Johnson as organist and director; Ole, Emma, and Clara Storaasli, Severt and Ben Funrue, Martin, Albert, and Anna Sather; and Hilda and Oscar Olson.

The young people organized themselves into St. John's Young Peoples Society, Jan. 17, 1894, at the parsonage, with pastor Sletten elected chairman and Ole Storaasli, secretary. The charter members were: Rev. O. R. Sletten, Martin Sather, Albert Sather, O. T. Storaasli, Olaf Johnson, Oscar Olson, T. O. Svengen, Mikkel Opsund, Tom Johnson, Amala Johnson, Ida Johnson, Marie Storaasli, and Hilda Olson. They held meetings every other Wednesday at six o'clock in the various homes, requiring a joining fee of 25 cents and one of 10 cent for each meeting. Very often interesting debates formed part of the program. Here, too, they used the Norwegian language until July 13, 1902 when they adopted the English language. They had really great projects, such as supplying the colored windows for the church.<sup>14</sup>



**YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETY OF ST. JOHN'S  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

The Sunday School became a reality about three years after the organization of the congregation with K. Funrue as the first superintendent; he served in that capacity for twelve years. Again travel conditions made attendance difficult, but the Sunday school grew in spite of obstacles. Martha Dullum was the teacher who started many of the children in the Norwegian ABC laesebok (reader) in preparation for reading the Norske søndagsskolebøker, The Norwegian Sunday School books. Those prepared for their confirmation, in Norwegian, during the first six years were:<sup>15</sup>

1894: Hilda J. Olsen, Olaf Johnson, and Sigured Nelson.

1895: Ole Opsund.

1896: Clara Storaasli, Marie Opsund, Alma Ask, Julia Lien, Gunger Gregersen, and Zaccarias Aas.

1897-99: None

1900: Theodore Opsund, Bardolf Storaasli, Herman Olsen, Annie Johnson.

Typical of the concern of both congregations for the church is the feeling expressed by Bent Tingelstad. In reminiscing about those early days during an interview with Lillie Madsen of the *Oregon Statesman* he said:

We speak of hard times now ... but you should have seen the early struggles of the church during “Cleveland’s times.” From 1893 to 1896 we had quite a struggle to keep going but never once did anyone discuss disbanding. Our minister with his wife and twelve children stayed on although his salary at that time was only \$160 a year from the congregation. However, even if the members had little cash to contribute toward his support, there were always vegetables, fruits and meats and these were legal tender at the pastor’s home ...<sup>16</sup>

Another reminder of their financial difficulties is reflected in the minutes of the Scandinavian congregation when several times they had had to ask to be excused *Page Thirty-Six* from sending a delegate to a Synod or District meeting because of the shortage of funds. At the January 20, 1895 meeting they decided to request the Mission Committee of the Norwegian Synod to give aid to the mission work in Oregon, which would, of course, include their congregation.

Besides gifts in kind for the pastor’s family, the members could well support their church with work on the building or school house, erecting woodsheds and fences, helping establish the cemetery, assisting in obtaining pledges, contributing wood for the stoves. A cherished reminder is the beautiful altar, still standing, built by Ole Hatteberg in 1895 for the Scandinavian church.

Not everyone was pleased that two congregations had been organized. The following is the expression of one of the group who made comment on the situation:

In church affairs it goes at a snail’s pace. Here in the Silverton area is found the largest Scandinavian settlement in Oregon, and when the Scandinavians here had come together there were enough of them to call their own pastor, but here we see some of the bitterest fruits of the strife within the Norwegian Lutheran church in this country ... They already decided from the beginning to organize two different congregations. They were advised by Pastor Sletten to organize without connection with the Synod and to stay outside any synod rather than to form two separate congregations; but no, the people were proud and there would be enough immigration in a short time, so that they could show each other ... But that was a mistake in their calculations. Both the United Church and the Synod people has its own pastor, but both congregations are having a hard existence. And then comes one more thing, that probably is the most sorrowful of all, and that is that not so few are staying outside of all this. They will wait a little until they see and become acquainted with things, and so they are during that time without God’s Word ... A. I. Aus<sup>17</sup>

Prior to the organization of these two congregations a small group of Norwegians, some of whom had settled earlier than those in Silverton, gathered themselves into a congregation, established as the Nidaros Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, near Monitor, Clackamas County, about seven miles from Silverton. On occasion the Rev. Mr. E. G. A. Christensen served them from 1877 to 1879; Rev. Mr. C. Jorgenson came between 1879 and 1884 and stayed after their organization, Nov. 23, 1884 until 1886. Their charter members included: Johannes Nilsen, O. E. F. Lee, P. K. Johnson, Peter Olsen, Jacob A. Anderson, Anders B. Andersen, Ivar Olsen, Edward Pedersen, P. H. Thompson, Ole J. Rønning, Ingeborg Pederson, Anders L. Nilsen, and Peder J. Hansen. They elected P. K. Johnson, P. H. Thompson, and Anders L. Nilsen trustees and Ivar Olsen secretary. In 1885 the following families joined them: S. O. Danielson, N. S. Brown, P. H. Wormdahl and Mikal Anderson. During this time Rev. Hagbarth Engh assisted them; Rev. J. J. Tackle, 1885-1887; E. Hove, 1887-91; O. R. Sletten, 1891-1894; N. J. Ellestad, 1894-95; C. M. Nødtvedt, 1895-1902; J. C. Reinertsen, 1902-1908 followed as their ministers.

They took up their first subscription for the budget, “samfundskass” on Jan. 24, 1893; it amounted to \$14.00. On April 17, 1892 they organized a Sunday school, with one teacher for English instruction and one for Norwegian. There would be subscriptions to the Sunday school papers in both languages. The same year a motion passed to pay the pastor \$104.00 per year. Richard Lorantsen offered the congregation a parcel of land provided a church would be built before November 1893. They succeeded, held the first business meeting in the new church with just a frame and outside walls on Sept. 23, 1893, laid the cornerstone on June 27<sup>th</sup>, with the *Page Thirty-eight* congregation finally being incorporated, Dec. 4th, 1893, with P. J. Olsen, Ole



Gregersen, and Richard Lorainsen as witnesses. While Pastor Reinertson served them the congregation grew, and they completed building their church.

The church register from those first days records the following:

First baptism (1884) Peder Sherman Johnson

First communion (1882) Johannes Nilsen & wife: Emerance Niben & wife.

First confirmation (\$892) Knute Gregersen, Claudius & Catherine Nilsen.

First marriage (1899) Jens Boe and Johanna Michelson.

The work of the ladies in this early church was similar to that of the other congregations. They organized in July 1892 at the home of Mrs. Jens Nelsen, with the following present: Mrs. O. R. Sletten, Mrs. Peder Andersen, Mrs. Ole Gregersen, Mrs. J. Nelsen, Mrs. P. H. Thompson, Mrs. Peder Olson, Mrs. Ole Rye, Mrs. Louis Melby, Mrs. Edward Petersen, and Mrs. Jens Nelsen. They started with a decision for ten-cent dues and a promise to gather funds to help build the church, besides working for missions.<sup>18</sup>

Letters in the July 15th and 24th 1895 issues of *Pacific Herald* tell of the missionary journey of “Ex,” who came to the Silverton community, preached at the Scandinavian church, then went five miles out to the Eager train station where a few Scandinavians gathered in competition to an American girl who had been preaching and becoming a big sensation. He then borrowed a horse from his old friend, Ingebret Larsen, in order to make his trip farther south in the valley. “Ex” detailed his long ride to a Scandinavian home three miles from Albany and then wrote about his intentions to go east twenty miles to Sodaville where several Norwegian families lived. Not long after the visit by “Ex”, Pastor Pedersen assisted these people at Sodaville in the organization of a congregation.<sup>19</sup>

A group of Norwegians organized March 1, 1896, at the home of Peder Gunderson in Sodaville; they chose Pastor Pedersen from Silverton as president of this Sodaville Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation; Mikkel Mikkelsen, secretary, and Gunerius Benson, Peder Gunderson, and Ole Peterson trustees for one year. The initiative for starting a congregation had developed in 1892 and 1893 when the Rev. Mr. Bjug Harstad had visited them several times. When they organized there were about twenty five members. After Pastor Pedersen left, Rev. S. M. Orwoll, 1899-1901 and Pastor O. M. Holden, 1901-1903 who came from Astoria, served them occasionally. Rev. H. H. Sorensen, the pastor in Astoria, sometimes came in 1902-1903, followed by Pastor J.O. Dahle. In 1906 the Rev. Mr. A. O. White from Silverton agreed to serve them four times a year, with a remuneration of \$20 a year.

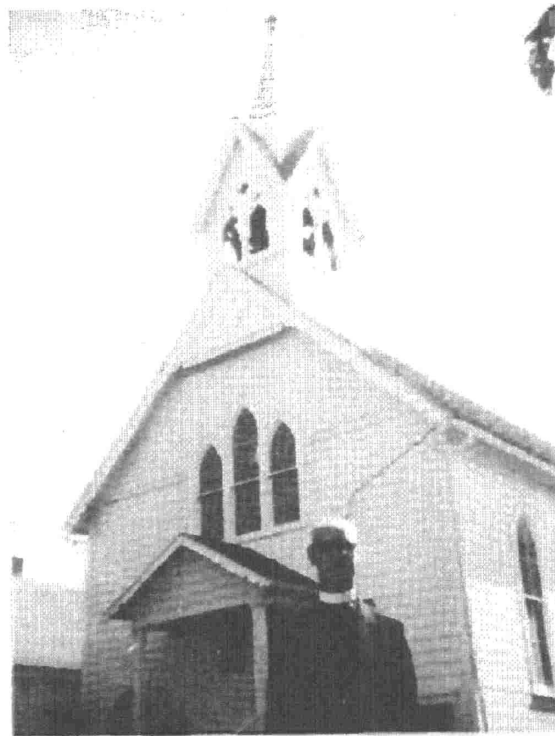
Their constitution, similar to that of the other Lutheran churches, noted for example: Their belief was based on the Bible, with the conduct of the members to be in accordance with it; there was provision for lay assistance. Any officers who did not conduct themselves in “Christian order” could be dismissed, and the church allowed no one who belonged to fraternal societies to become members. Anyone who did not contribute financially, except for the reason of poverty, was to be “brotherly exhorted”. They set aside one section of their cemetery for burial for non members, with a full lot costing \$5.00, a half lot \$3.00, and a single grave \$1.00.<sup>20</sup>

Fourteen years after the organization of the two Silverton Lutheran congregations, the Silverton Evangelical Lutheran Free Church incorporated Feb. 6, 1906 in order to be a church home for another Scandinavian group. The following families were charter members: Torger H. Brokke, Frank Lund, *Page Thirty-nine* Karl Herigstad, Nels Herigstad, John Anderson, and Andrew Moore. They elected Torger Brokke president; Frank Lund, secretary; and Karl Herigstad, trustee. Prior to organizing, this small group had also held services in their individual homes. On Feb. 10, 1906, the new congregation purchased the First Church of Christ for \$600 for its church edifice. Visiting pastors and laymen conducted services until March 24, 1907, when the Rev. Mr. J.O. Arvik began a ministry which continued until 1909. Pastor B. A. Borrevik served until 1914;

then he asked for a leave of absence to do evangelistic work and serve Bethany College in Everett, Washington. Visiting pastors served until his return in 1917, remaining until 1925.

With very few exceptions, all of the older generation were born in Norway. It is, therefore, not strange that they used the Norwegian language exclusively for their meetings. Alternate English and Norwegian services did not begin until July 1931; even then evening services in Norwegian continued until March 1937.

The membership list up to 1912 included the following families: T. H. Brokke, G. S. Alrick. Nels Herigstad,



**CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Sven Uma, F. Lund, Carl Herigstad, James Andersen, Andrew Moore, John Andersen, O. J. Woare, Knute Rue, I. S. Moe, Peter Breen, E. H. Dokken, Mary Eriksen, John Ludvikien, Franze Lund, Ben Pedersen, Mrs. Oscar Pedersen, Hannah Johnson, Hartvig Stensvig, and BA. Borrevik.

In time this congregation, too, included a Sunday school, Luther League, and other organizations in its program.<sup>21</sup>

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#### *Footnotes*

1. *Pacific Lutheran Herald*. July 6, 1932.
2. Silverton Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church, *Minutes*, trans, Mane Tingelstad. (Silverton, Or., 195?), p. 7-10.
3. *Ibid.*, p.9.
4. *Ibid.*, p 12-13.
5. *Lutheran University Herald*, Dec. 25. 1894.
6. Silverton Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Church, *Register*, 1892-95.
7. Martha Isaacson, *History of Trinity Lutheran Ladies Aid of Silverton. Oregon, 1893-1942; Pacific Lutheran Herald*, April 21, 1937.
8. Trinity Lutheran Church, Silverton, Or., *Golden Jubilee of Trinity Lutheran Church* (Silverton, Or., 1942)
9. Silverton Scandinavian, *Register*.
10. Young People's Christian Society of the Silverton's Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation, *Minutes*.
- II. Silverton Scandinavian, *Register*.
12. Martin Tingelstad. *Correspondence*, Dec. 6, 1901.
13. Immanuel Lutheran Church, Silverton, Or., *Immanuel Lutheran Church, Silverton, Oregon Fiftieth Anniversary 1892-1942*. (Silverton, Or., 1967)

14. Immanuel Lutheran Church, Silverton, Or., *Immanuel Lutheran Church, Silverton. Oregon, 1892-1967*. (Silverton, Or., 1967)
15. Immanuel Lutheran, *Fiftieth Anniversary*. p.18-24.
16. Lillie Madsen, *Oregon Statesman* (quoted in *Pacific Lutheran Herald*) July 6, 1932.
17. *Decorah Posten*. Jan. 1, 1897.
18. Knut Gregersen, *History of Nidaros Congregation*: Nidaros church records.
19. *Pacific Herald*, July 15 and July 24, 1895.
20. Sodaville norsk evangelisk lutherske menighet, Congregational records (in translation); O.M. Norlie, *Norsk Lutherske menigheter i Amerika, 1843-1916*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg. 1918) v.1, p.261.
21. Calvary Lutheran Church, Silverton Or., *Church records and 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary* booklet.

## CHAPTER VI HOME – SCHOOL – COMMUNITY

The home life of these Scandinavians in many ways was not very different from that of the other early settlers. Usually the family was quite large which meant that the daily chores, as well as the farm duties, ordinarily could be taken care of by themselves.

Special Scandinavian traditions for holidays and the foods accompanying them, however, did need special attention, for they did not quickly forget their culinary heritage. No doubt they were responsible too for the weekly advertisements in the *Silverton-Appeal* reminding them that the general stores carried cod fish, herring, mackerel, and the like, as well as their essential “klumpe sucker,” the cubed sugar necessary for a good cup of coffee. As related previously in chapter four, fish – so very important to them - made long trips by wagon to the coast to get a fresh supply necessary. A letter from one farmer told of his sending money with a friend going to Tacoma hoping that the friend would bring back the fish he desired.

Nearly all the homes subscribed to the Iowa Norwegian newspaper, the *Decorah Posten*. This medium brought them national news, but more important almost was the fact that it brought them news of other Scandinavians, primarily in the Middle West. In addition, mostly through its “Korrespondance” column, it offered them an

opportunity to write letters in which they could glorify Oregon, occasionally criticize it, and also seriously advise others who planned to come west. The *Skandinaven*, the *Minneapolis Tidende*, and *Amerika* are but three of several additional Scandinavian newspapers known to be read in this area. The Lutheran church papers, *Evangelisk Lutherak Kirkstidende* or *Lutheraneren*, and *Lutheran University Herald* - later called *Pacific Herald* - were in nearly every home. The first two brought news of their particular Lutheran synod and the latter was a west coast paper, published in Parkland, Washington. The *Silverton Appeal* had been in existence for several years before these people came in any numbers. It became the English paper, possibly the only one, in nearly every home.

Visiting friends and neighbors was a very common source of pleasure. Each week’s *Silverton Appeal* recorded those visits, and it also mentioned when they became overnight stays because of great distances or possibly bad road conditions. Frequent visitors from “The East” came, some including friends who had come out to survey the area prior to making a decision about moving to this far away land. Such visits were most welcome because they brought a time for renewing friendships and also because they helped relieve moments of loneliness. Indications are that more than one young mother was “homesick” for family and the familiar which now were so remote.

However, opportunity for some travel even in the earliest of days existed because *Page Forty-two* of trains both to Salem and to Portland, as well as to the south. A description of an early train ride came from an interview with Julius Alm. He said of that 1893 train:

It was a narrow-gauge railroad, with a little wood-burner engine that ran from Woodburn to Silverton. It had to stop several times each trip, and the passengers would get out and help load the wood on. They would ride until the wood was burned up. Those who did not want to help load wood would hunt pheasant. There were many China pheasants in the fields and anyone could shoot them.<sup>1</sup>

The train might have taken the pastor to Sodaville and neighboring communities to conduct church services, or the slower means of transportation, the bicycle and the team of horses, might have taken some of the elders to hear a political speaker in Salem and the young ones to a party up in the hills.

The activities of the church were considered of primary importance by nearly all the families. For the young people, their own society became the center of their social life. Selma Evens Holman, when interviewed, reflected that she had felt that the church really provided all that was needed then for their social life as young people. Weddings could be elaborate then, too, and an opportune time for friends to gather. The account of the Larsen-Sorensen wedding in the local paper, July 15, 1904, referred to the dinner at the bride's home for over a hundred guests and the speeches which followed. Even the newspaper extended its blessing.

Lengthy vacations were not very common. Several people reminisced, however, about family trips to a neighboring hot springs, five or ten miles from Silverton, where they would camp, Willholt Springs being most frequently named. A group of five Norwegians did take the unusual trip, a journey to visit the homeland, in 1910, Mr. & Mrs. Ole Steen, Mr. & Mrs. H. Thompson, and Bent Tingelstad. The *Silverton Appeal* asked Tingelstad to write about this experience. He told of the thrill awaiting all of them upon their arrival in Norway which none had seen for many years, of the trip which had taken them over three weeks to make one way because of several delays en route, of the inconveniences and the humor attached to traveling third class on an ocean liner, and of some of the less desirable people they saw or met while so traveling. He wrote about his travels around Norway with his brothers, but said that after almost four months of wandering his loyalty to Oregon and a feeling of "homesickness" made him begin the return journey. He said: "In conclusion let me say that if anyone imagines his wife isn't as good a cook as she ought to be or his home in Oregon isn't worth having - in short, begins to feel cranky - let him take a tour abroad and he will certainly come home a better husband and citizen." <sup>2</sup>

A young man's account of life on the farm and his activities and work in particular could well be typical of country living for most of them. Martin Tingelstad, age fifteen, wrote the following to brother Oscar in school in Washington:

Monday there was a school meeting down at the school-house and Papa was elected a director for one year. Thursday evening there was a school meeting here for the purpose of electing a teacher to teach a spring term of 10 weeks (at Brush Creek school) There were three applicants .. Tillie Foss was accepted as teacher, There was Ladies Aid Society here Wednesday last, but as the weather was very bad only a few here ... There came in \$1.65 in money. Mrs. Ole Hagen and family departed for Tacoma Tuesday last ... As it will soon be time to take care of the strawberries, I will work your two rows on shares. I will do the work and get two thirds of the berries and you the remaining third. How does that suit you? ... (March 28, 1900)

Page Forty-three

He also wrote:

Papa and Hagen are ... digging down the tiles. The Japanese are done fixing the track over to the Wood Pile up by the crossing ... They are making a nice bicycle path by the side. We sent for 28 yards of carpet to J. J. Mark & Co. in Portland. The price was 60 cents a yard (Letter, Jan 22, 1900) Fellow to start a Creamery over at Salem & he wanted to buy cream here ... Out to Jensens and got bushel of clover-seed ... Saw a fellow riding a Rambler out there along the path ... Pa & I have been cutting stove-wood (about 4 cords) Also 3 or 4 cords of *Railroad* to cut ... sold some hay (Letter, March 2, 1900) ... Two trains came into Silverton. One had 10 coaches, the other 3 ... We have been slashing most of the week. We have got 10 or 11 acres slashed now. Yesterday & this forenoon I have (been) working for H. Lowere cutting suckers. I got 4 Bits a day and my dinner. We had a few tame strawberries already. I sold two Boxes up town for 10c apiece (Letter, May 25, 1900) ... Pedersen had about 40,000 lbs of prunes which he sold the other day for 3 cents... (Letter, Oct. 14, 1901)... Dad and I hauled home 8 loads of poles last week. We also hauled 8 loads for Johnson's dad up to his house. Next week C.P. Larson Is going to come down and saw them ... (Letter, Oct. 8, 1900) There was talk last Sunday about getting up a Picnic the 17th of May and charging everybody 25c for their dinner to raise money for the church. We are of course to have a programme in the afternoon ... (Feb. 4, 1902) ... The Republican Co. Convention meets in Salem next Wednesday. Three Scandinavians were appointed delegates viz.: O. L. Hatteberg, Martin Sather and P.K. Johnson (Letter, March 23, 1902) <sup>3</sup>

Concerning hop pickers and their welfare, John Goplerud wrote in a letter to Oscar Tingelstad:



**HOP PICKING AT THE RUE AND DOKKEN HOP YARDS**

*Page Forty-four*

... If you want to work in the hop field ... three dollars in it ... Last year we were forced to do a little Sunday work ... This year it will not be practical under any consideration. I have been wondering and planning what could be done for the recreation and cheering up, and even, perhaps, the 'mental nourishment' of the pickers. I believe we are in duty bound to help the pickers, even, to enjoy themselves. We can have a "Pickers Banquet" with songs and speeches, and that is where you will come in handy.<sup>4</sup>

Further evidence that farm life provided a good share of recreational activity, besides swimming in the creek, is shown in the following memoir:

The farm was a great place for kids. We worked hard but also played hard. Martin and I both hunted and fished whenever we would find time. Martin was a natural born salesman. He was always trading things with other kids. He had a 12 gauge shotgun with a magazine holding 6 shells. I had just a single barreled gun, plus a 32 caliber rifle ... Moles, gophers and graydiggers were thick. One noon Martin and I went out. We shot around 20 graydiggers in an hour. They were relatively easy to trap or shoot. Pocket gophers had to be trapped. That was quite a trick. The county paid a bounty of 10 cents per scalp for gopher scalps. I always had traps out. Occasionally I caught a skunk. To get him out of the trap was a ticklish problem. Once I caught a mink. Got \$3 for the hide from a fur company in St. Louis. I also shot a swan which we had stuffed. The last I saw of it, it was on display in the ... Peoples Bank.<sup>5</sup>

When asked why their families came to Silverton, several of the descendants interviewed indicated that a primary reason was for an opportunity to receive a better education than that offered where they had lived previously. Since the majority of them were farm families, the children had their initial schooling mostly in the rural schools, such as Brush Creek, Bethany, and Evens Valley. Those in the proximity of Silverton went to the town school. Their educational experience had local color added to it particularly if the pupils were under the tutelage of Jim Buff, almost a legendary name to Silverton pioneers. Martha Iaaacson recalled that he even pretended he could speak Norwegian. Oscar Satern remembered that Buff would carry a can with coals in it on cold days in order to keep his hands warm, Emma Refatand remembered his velocipede, a handcar he used on the railroad tracks. Buff's dress could be very unusual, with a blanket used in lieu of coat and a corset worn on the outside of his clothing for special effect at certain occasions.

An announcement of the first teacher of Scandinavian heritage to be hired for the local school seemed important enough to be a news item for the *Silverton Appeal*. The editor said that Miss Antoniette Johnson was a Scandinavian light here in Silverton and that she had won the students' hearts.<sup>6</sup>

For many of the children, entrance into public school first formally introduced them to the English language. Mrs. Isaacson recalled that other children teased the Scandinavian children because they would use two languages on the school grounds while using only English in the classroom. In some cases the education of the children in the English language also opened the door to English for one or both of the parents who previously had used only the Scandinavian languages. At the same time that some parents were insistent that their children learn the English language at school, they were equally firm in wanting them to retain the language of their heritage at home. Others wanted to Americanize the family more quickly and especially encouraged the use of English at home.

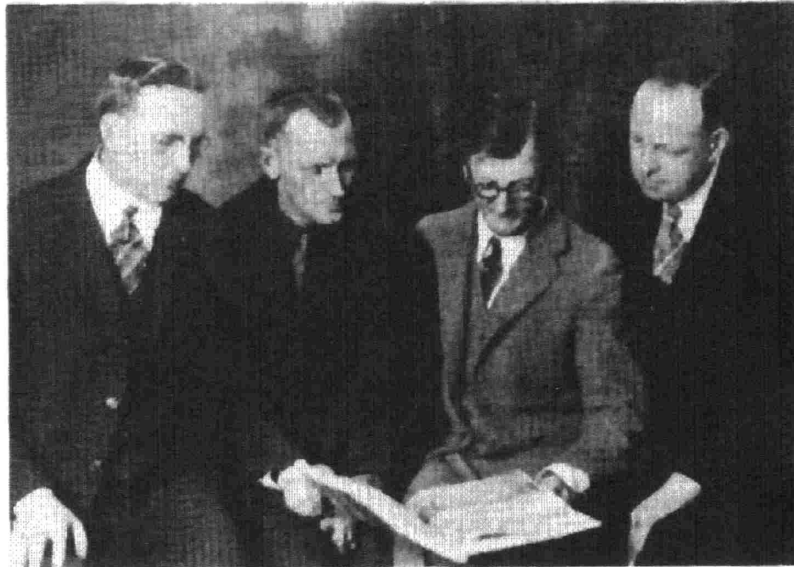
High school was a limited experience, partly because not all four years were *Page Forty-five* available until 1902, and partly because the young people needed to work. The 1903 high school class of nineteen graduates included the following young people from those early families: Ernest Tweed, Theodore Opsund, Annette M. Benson, Elmer Olson, and Bonnie Funrue. Several young men and women were able to attend Pacific Lutheran Academy (first called, Pacific Lutheran University) which had been established in Parkland, Washington. Others attended business colleges, such as Capital Business College and Behnke Business College in Salem, while still others, such as Minnie Funrue, took correspondence courses to prepare for bookkeeping jobs in local stores. In a few years several of the young men were able to go for higher education to one of the colleges of the church, in Decorah, Iowa and Northfield, Minnesota, or to attend the University of Oregon. In the early 1900's Columbia College, in Everett, Washington also attracted some of them from St. John's congregation. At the time when this college was being established there had been considerable interest by members of St. John's in trying to have it located in an available building in Silverton. Pastor Reinertsen wrote in the *Silverton Appeal*: "Let us work now while there is a ghost of a chance to secure this great educational and financial impetus to our growing city."<sup>6</sup>

The churches did try to show their concern for the development of their academies, but church records indicate that the monetary response could never be very great, especially during the early depression years. From as early as 1894, however, there is a record of the profits from the Seventeenth of May Festival at the Scandinavian church being sent to Pacific Lutheran University. This was a contribution towards the completion of its main building. The Festival attendance had been 150 people with proceeds cleared of \$29.37. Intentions were also that by summer the congregation could provide \$50, which was the necessary sum for completing a dormitory room. Again in May 1897 they sent \$31.05, a response from 76 people, among whom were the confirmands who gave thirty five cents each. Pastor Pedersen expressed his hope that this offering practice would become common in the Church's district and that the older districts in the East would do likewise.<sup>7</sup>

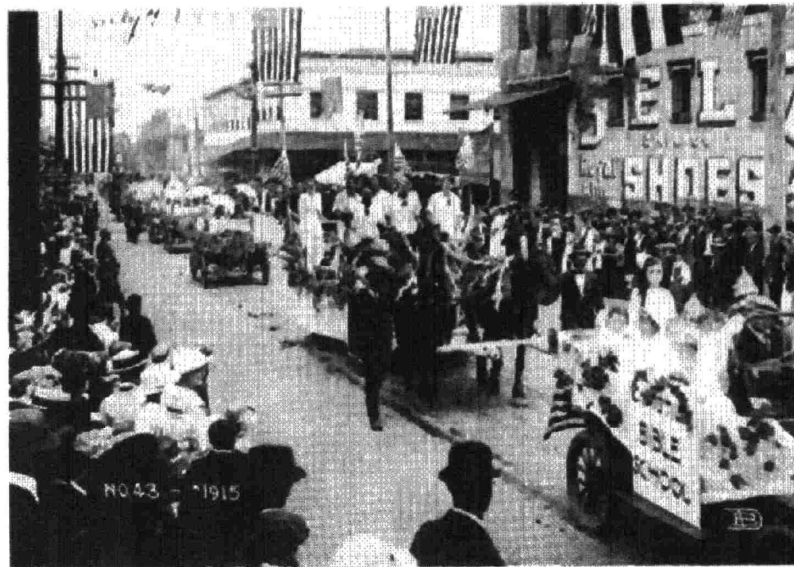
Some of the young people were privileged to grow up with books in their homes. In addition to the Norwegian devotional materials, there might be books of Norwegian poetry but also some of English literature. Alma Halvorson, for one, recalled that in her home there always seemed to be money for books. The most common musical instruments in the first homes were the reed organ, the mandolin, and the violin - with the music from the "fiddle" quite often being played "by ear". Both churches established choirs. Pastor A. O. White at the Scandinavian Lutheran Church, partly because of his own musical ability, was so interested in the development of the choir that he was willing at times to buy chorale books from his own money. The same congregation had a men's quartet which became well known under the patriotic name, the *Red, White, and Blue Quartet*. The members of the quartet were Carl Benson, Oscar Tingelstad, Axel Larsen, and Louie Meyer. Their itinerary circled around to church programs and meetings, school entertainments, and other public gatherings in the community. Their favorite pieces seemed to be "Bullfrog on the Bank" and

“Good Night Ladies”. Equally well known was the family orchestra which came out of the A. G. Steelhammer home and which appeared at various community events.

Interest in the community and its activities developed gradually as the Scandinavians became rooted in the Silverton area. At a congregational meeting in June 1896 the Scandinavian church decided that their church could be used by resident Scandinavians for discussion of community affairs, with the exception of political questions. Their people, however, did participate in governmental affairs to a *Page Forty-seven* limited extent and several became members of the local school board. Later Julius Alm, John Goplerud, Ole Hatteberg and others were on the board for the People’s Bank. The *Silverton Appeal* verified political trips to Salem and special events, such as the appearance of William Jennings Bryan, which attracted some of them.



**THE RED, WHITE, AND BLUE QUARTET OF 1901 REMINISCING**  
(Axel Larsen, Louie H. Meyer, Carl Benson, Oscar Tingelstad)



**FOURTH OF JULY PARADE CHURCH FLOATS**

The Fourth of July celebration, sponsored at least one year by the church young people, is recorded in the *Silverton Appeal*, July 12, 1901, giving the following account of what it called a “Great Success”:



Program was as follows: *Morning*: Welcome - Rev. A.O. White; Declaration of Independence - Mathea Jensen; Patriotic recitation - Annette Benson; Young People's Society Orchestra (ten members) - Selections; Male chorus from the Society - Star Spangled Banner and the "Soldier's Chorus"; Speaker - O. A. Tingelstad (Cand. theol.) - American Brotherhood; Community sing; America. This was followed by a picnic dinner sponsored by the Ladies Aid. Refreshments stands were in addition. *Afternoon program*: Orchestra and chorus; Speaker - Hon. O. P. Hogg, Commissioner for Labor for Oregon; Remarks . "Daddy" Steelhammer. Races, an impromptu ball game and social games continued then until twilight.

Another event which was meant for the entire community and held in the Opera House, in January 1906, was an illustrated lecture on Norway by Ole Johann Saevoid from Norway.

A large modern stereopticon of 1500 candle power manipulated by an expert operator casts a clear colored view 16 feet square upon a dazzling screen while the lecturer in florid language carries you from place to place from the southern border of this rock bound land to the most northern city. We feel proud to present to the people of this city such a clean, instructive and interesting program.

The same church sponsored the Luther College Band from Decorah, Iowa. The newspaper report indicated that the sponsors at first had been concerned whether or not such a small town could be able to sponsor "an organization of such great reknown". They were assured, however, of a good crowd, partly because of the pastor's acquaintance with the band but partly because of its ability. Tickets were 50 and 75 cents, while in Portland the charge was \$1.00 and \$1.50. "In the company are some of the best singers now before the public, and the band is said to be the best known in the USA." A street parade preceded the concert.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Footnotes*

1. U.S. Works Progress Administration, *Ethnic Groups Interviews*, Series 1. (Julius Alm) (Salem, Or.: State Library, 1939) Box 63.
2. *Silverton Appeal*, Aug. 26, 1910.
3. Martin Tingelstad, personal letters, 1900-1902.
4. John Goplerud, personal letter, April 6. 1901.
5. Edwin Tingelstad, *Memoirs*. (Corvallis, Or., 1973)
6. *Silverton Appeal*, Feb. 21, 1903.
7. *Lutheran University Herald*, March 25, 1894.
8. *Silverton Appeal*, July 12, 1907. Jan. 19, 1906, and Aug. 3, 1906.

## CHAPTER VII THEIR SCANDINAVIAN TIES

Two strong threads, in particular, bound them together. One was their number, which strengthened as more and more families came into the area. The other was their dependence, especially in the early years, on the Scandinavian languages at home and at church particularly. The second thread was attached to “Back East”, their former home, through the Scandinavian language newspapers, such as *Decorah Posten* and *Skandinaven*.

It did not take long before the community became aware of their presence. The local newspaper in its reporting soon recognized the “Scandinavian Settlement” as an integral part of the community. The following are samplings of their names and events appearing in the “local column” and news articles of the *Silverton Appeal*:

Jan 23, 1886. Circuit court jury list included William Johnson, Silverton, farmer and Alex Thompson, farmer.

March 6, 1886. Roster of the Geo. H. Thomas Post No.11 GAR. Silverton included Silas Hanson, March 20 had his advertisement as proprietor of a barber shop. He was also the city marshall and member of the Silver Creek Lodge no. 93.

March 11, 1893. I. Larsen, Otis Larsen and Adolf Molden departed on Monday’s train for Lewiston, Idaho.

Sept. 30, 1893. Storaasli Bros. are always at front with the low prices. A full line of general merchandise. Call and see them.

April 15, 1899. The Pacific District of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church will hold their annual spring meeting in Silverton ... (This notice also written in Norwegian in the same issue)

May 13, 1899. A team belonging to P. K. Johnson of Mt. Angel ran away Thursday near the Long Bridge.

July 1, 1899. M. Johnson passed through the city yesterday with a light horse team hauling a new \$500 boiler for his steam saw mill 7 miles south of the city.

June 15, 1901. Go to Sather’s and see what \$1 will buy. Prunes, 50 pounds; 9 pounds of 15c roasted coffee; 12 cans of beans or peas; 30 bars of best laundry soap etc. etc.

July 13, 1901. Get your groceries at Bentson’s, the new store ... C. P. Larson is ready to saw wood at 40c per cord with the steam saw recently purchased.

Dec. 14, 1901. The Scandinavians are undoubtedly at fault for this frosty weather.

Aug. 30, 1902. Service in English will be held in the Lutheran Church Sunday evening. The forenoon services will be in the Scandinavian tongue.

Aug. 22, 1903. Some of our Scandinavian friends shipped 850 pounds of dried black cap berries to North Dakota Wednesday. They get 30c per pound for this product. This is a very commendable enterprise.

The above indicates that the events in the daily life of these relatively new residents of Silverton were equally important to the newspaper editor as were those of long time Silvertonians. It was unusual, however, when the editor of the *Silverton Appeal*, J. E. Hosmer, offered space in the paper for a column which was to be written in the Norwegian language. Julius Alm had been the spokesman for this request. He justified accepting the offer in the Sept. 27, 1902 *Appeal*, as he believed that since the request had been granted the Scandinavians certainly should make use of this opportunity. Many would think, he said, that it would not be necessary to have something in the Scandinavian languages since many read English, but he did not believe that was a reason for forsaking the mother tongue which he thought to be the most beautiful and powerful on earth. The young people that way would have an opportunity to improve themselves in this language. In addition, the older people would have a chance to write an article or two just as they did for *Decorah Posten*, *Skandinaven*, and other Norwegian American newspapers. He also said that while they had been few to begin with, now they were growing in numbers and who knew how many there would be in ten years? The Scandinavians here, as in the East, must engage in worthwhile projects.

Let this apace which is offered to us be the beginning for the Scandinavians to get their own newspaper in Silverton. The Chicago *Skandinaven* did not begin in a much better situation thirty three years ago, so perhaps thirty three years from now will the *Skandinaven* of Silverton, Oregon be one of the leading papers of the west coast.<sup>1</sup>

Alm assumed responsibility for this Norwegian column, called *Skandia*, which continued for several years. The column related to their everyday happenings and also included local poetry and literary selections, with Bjørnsterne Bjørnson, the Norwegian poet, being Alm's favorite. There were reminders to keep in touch with family in Norway, to be concerned when the mail from there did not arrive, and to make newcomers and prospective settlers of their kind most welcome when they came to Silverton. His sense of humor readily showed, as when he was mistaken that the meeting called to try to adopt the Norwegian name, Rosendal, valley of roses apparently did not reach the favorable decision he expected for the Brush Creek community and when he was searching for news he asked if no reporter could even find anything to complain about. In like manner he said:

Many of us have heard on the street corners that the Scandinavians have come to take over, and why not? There is nothing too good for them.<sup>2</sup>

Don't forget that the cheapest doctor, the cleanest medicine, and the best preacher is fresh air, good water, and a good example.<sup>3</sup>

Commenting on a meeting of the Young People's Society of the Synod church, he asked why not form an organization for the older people in order to refresh old minds. The editor would like to be one of them. Who will initiate that?<sup>4</sup>

There was also a reminder of an old country Christmas custom which they had not observed, putting a bundle of wheat out for the small birds. To do this would be a good example for the children and give satisfaction to the elders. Alm included a long biographical article on "Daddy" Steelhammer who was well known for his *Page Fifty* great interest in community and political affairs as well as his blacksmith business. He also allowed two issues of the column for a long 17th of May speech given in Ellendale, Minnesota. No doubt Alm felt that it was important for the Silverton Norwegians to be reminded of Norway's independence day.

And there were questions such as:

How is it with our old friends in Parkland? Some one among you write so we get to hear how it is with you. All is well in Silverton.<sup>5</sup>

Isn't any more news happening in Rosendal? If nothing else, you Ole Satern must do something out of the way so we get something to write about from there.<sup>6</sup>

When shall Silverton have its own Scandinavian newspaper? M. A. Tweed tells about a man in Hubbard who is willing to begin a newspaper here if 500 subscribers could let us see what could be done.<sup>7</sup>

Who is there who will help the editor so that *Skandia* will compete with *Skandinaven*. *Amerika*, *Decorah Posten* and other first class newspapers in the United States. In the end correspondents are needed. Certainly the pay will be little, perhaps the first 10-20 years, but it took longer yet to build Rome, and as big as it was, yet It was nothing from the beginning.<sup>8</sup>

An idea, fathered by Bent Tingelstad, found expression in *Skandia*, June 6, 1903, but unfortunately never was carried out; otherwise we would have today more accurate information about these early settlers:

Except for a couple families who have been here a long time, the many Scandinavians have come in the last 10 to 12 years, and we are only a fraction of what will come, that is for sure. Now is the time that the “old” must give up for the “young”....

Now the thought is that we who have been the pioneers for the Scandinavian settlement around Silverton write down and send in to Mr. G.M. Opsund a biography of ourselves which will be copied in the best form and preserved for the kinfolk to come. The biography will give year and place of birth, when left the homeland, where settled first, where settled later, and when came to the Silverton settlement. This gives an idea of how to do it. There are no rules to follow. Those who wish can have the biography published in *Skandia*, and at the same time it should be given to Mr. Opsund who has taken upon himself to do the work gratis.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to their association through the churches, a few Norwegians established in 1912 a social and benevolent society belonging to the Sons of Norway. but this organization did not exist very long since the majority of the early settlers preferred to center their activity almost entirely on life in the church. Their sponsorship of programs for their own benefit as well as that of the community has been mentioned. An additional example reminds again of their interest in the land of their birth. Anton Sannes, at the Woodman of the World Hall, was to present a program consisting of well known popular Norwegian songs and readings. The entire program was listed in the *Silverton Appeal*

The merchants Storaasli, Bentson, Aim, Dlggerness and others who catered to their needs - also added strength to the Scandinavian ties when they were essential. On the other hand, these merchants served the needs of the entire community well and thereby received recognition for themselves as well as the Scandinavian settlement.

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In time the Scandinavian threads also became a durable part of the fabric which these people wove into the Silverton country history.

#### *Footnotes*

1. *Silverton Appeal*, Sept. 27, 1902.
2. *Ibid.*, Oct. II, 1902
3. *Ibid.*, Oct. II, 1902.
4. *Ibid.*, Dec. 27, 1902.
5. *Ibid.*, Feb. 21, 1903.
6. *Ibid.*, May 16, 1903.
8. *Ibid.*, Jan. 17, 1903.
9. *Ibid.*, June 6, 1903.

## CHAPTER VIII THEIR HORIZON WIDENED

With the turn of the century these people still had their Scandinavian ties. Gradually, however, u their horizon widened, they were integrated into the community. As described in Bjork's *West of the Great Divids* many of them had become well established.

There, in the north and south Silverton precincts, the census takers of 1900 found, with several exceptions, only farmers; even the exceptions, although listed as carpenters, shoemakers, and laborers, owned land ... It is also evident that the Silverton settlers had brought a fair supply of liquid capital with them. Of the 39 families investigated, 29 owned 'free farms' and 8 owned mortgaged farms; one rented and one was an agricultural worker. Remembering the land prices that prevailed in the Silverton area in the early 1890's, one realizes that these families had sold their valuable properties in the Red River Valley or elsewhere to secure the wherewithal for migration and the purchase of farms in the Willamette Valley. In 1900 most of these settlers and their wives, all of them Norwegian born, were in their fifties, and some were over sixty; only a few were under fifty. For the most part, they were a mature and solid rural group experienced in the farm life of the Upper Midwest.<sup>1</sup>

Those who were not farmers, or part-time farmers, were merchants, as previously mentioned, or day laborers. The newly established lumber mill provided employment for a number of them. And they were still concerned that more of their kinfolk should join them and were willing to assist when possible. Pastor Nils Pedersen wrote twice in 1900 in the *Pacific Herald* in order to answer some of the questions coming to him in regard to the Silverton area for settlement. Inquiries were as follows:

How big is the Willamette Valley in western Oregon?  
Was the Willamette Valley originally covered with forest?  
Is all the land in the Valley taken up, or is there yet homestead land to get?  
What kind of farming is carried on in the Willamette Valley?  
Of what quality is the soil and is it fertile?  
What is the price of land in the surroundings of Silverton?  
What is the climate like out there?  
Isn't the rain time unhealthy and uncomfortable?  
How far is Silverton from Portland, and what is its railroad service?  
Are there many Scandinavians around Silverton?

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Is it better to live in Oregon, or, for example, in Wisconsin, Minnesota or Dakota?  
Will you advise a man with family to move to Oregon?  
Is there a congregation in Silverton that belongs to the Norwegian Synod?<sup>2</sup>

The community wanted them, too. In 1910 the Silverton Commercial Club published a pamphlet in which they presented the low cost for establishing a home:

Land may be obtained with an abundant supply of fuel on it for home consumption ... He who wishes to build a residence, chicken house, barn or outbuilding can obtain no. 1 common lumber at the mills for \$10 per thousand feet, or less than one third what the same quality of lumber costs at the mills of Wisconsin. The lumber bill for a house is about one fourth what it is in the prairie states of the Middle West or in the East.<sup>3</sup>

*The Settler's Handbook to Oregon*, 1904, offered considerable encouragement to those who would venture forth and concluded with "Nature is kindly to us. Nothing there is, on her side, to forbid the invitation to join us which may be gathered from the foregoing pages."<sup>4</sup>

Several Scandinavians obligingly added their endorsement to the real estate advertisement of O.A. Webb in the *Silverton Appeal* (e.g. June 2.3, 1905): <sup>5</sup>

To whom It may concern. We the undersigned assert that the Willamette Valley, especially Marion Co., is a splendid farming, hop, grain, vegetable and dairy country. Water is pure and cool, and the climate is mild. It is a land of plenty. We cheerfully recommend G. A. Webb, to all who this circular may chance to meet, as perfectly reliable.

Rev. J.C. Reinerston  
B.R. Bentson  
T.A. Riches, P.M.

Rev. N. Pedersen  
A.G. Steelhammer  
Julius Alm

It is hoped that not all responses to encouragement to come to the Silverton country involved as tedious and long journey as did the following as late as 1905:

Jacob Severson and family of Lolita, Calif., arrived here Monday ... They came all the way from Lolita, Calif., a distance of 450 miles, with teams, and were a little more than five weeks on the road. Mr. Severson expects to buy or rent a farm in this vicinity and make this his future home. <sup>6</sup>

The following are a few of the families who arrived in Silverton around the turn of the century:

P L Goplerud (1898)	Andrew Quall (1901?)	Martin Peter Larsen (1903)
Thomas Tweed (1899)	A. A. Grinde (1901?)	Sylfest Ness (1903?)
Maurice Johnson (1899)	B. R. Bentson (1901)	Joseph Nerison (1903?)
Nils Sorenson (1900)	Johan Hemmingsen (1901)	M. G. Gunderson (1903?)
J. P. Larsen (1900)	Ole Loe (1901)	John Hatteberg (1903?)
Louis Toft (1900)	M. J. Madsen (1902)	Knut Lee (1903?)
B. F. Foss (1901)	Knut Loe (1902)	Jacob Nerison (1903)
Mons Hesjedahl (1901)	Jakob Iversen (1902)	O. S. Hauge (1904)
Ole Rodby (1901)	Martin Hanson (1902)	Nordahl O. Hleman (1904)
A. C. Meyer (1901)	F. E. Johnson (1903)	Halvor Ramberg (1904)
		Gilbert Gottenberg (1905)

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These came to the Monitor community in the 1890's and early 20<sup>th</sup> century:

Ole P. Skjele; Ole Rostvold; John Lee; Lars Landsem; Reier Lima; Anton Husby; Anton Sjøeng.

By this time some of these people were able to take active part in the community civic and social affairs. The following are a few examples of those who have been recognized in historical literature:

S.H. Lima, a prosperous agriculturist, became the head of a flour mill in the Monitor area and he also served on the local school board.

AG. Steelhammer was active in Republican party affairs and in several lodges. He also served in the legislature.

O.L. Hatteberg served a term in the legislature and also was one of the founders of the People's Bank.

Julius Alm was president of the People's Bank and also served on the school board.

P. K. Johnson, a farmer, also was active in Republican party activities.

Some of their younger generation, as indicated previously, sought higher education outside the area. A number of them, however, also remained to farm in the community. Carl Benson, John Goplerud, and Albert Sather were but three of them who continued in farming and became prosperous farmers. As was to be expected, others sought employment outside the Silverton area.

The horizon widened also through the work of the churches, Nils Pedersen in his resignation letter as pastor of the Scandinavian church in 1905 gave thought to the future and to his reason why they should secure a younger pastor. The congregation would in all probability grow considerably in the near future and someone who could work for "Home Missions" would be needed because there would likely be much emigration at Scandinavians in the future.<sup>7</sup>

The answer to his request came in their next pastor, Rev. A.O. White, who received a salary of \$400, plus a free house, and the festival offerings and remunerations for ministerial acts. Pastor White extended the work of the church by his monthly services at McKee, where he organized a church of ten families, and by occasional meetings at Central Howell, Brownsville, and Sodaville.

In 1908 the Silverton congregation granted Pastor White time to make several trips to Coos Bay in order to organize a church, primarily of Norwegian lumbermen. This trip meant first a journey by train to Portland and then by ship to Astoria and down the coast to Coos Bay. Other pioneering trips took the pastor into the Cascades where he might minister to an elderly lady and willingly share her "Alive" gammelost (old cheese).

The work of St. John's congregation progressed during these years under the leadership of the ministers C. M. Nødtvedt, 1896-1902; I. C. Reinertsen, 1902-1908; and H. M. Mason, 1909-1911. Pastor Nødtvedt and Pastor Reinertsen also preached at Canby and occasionally at Toledo and Eugene. Pastor I. O. Arvik, pastor at the Silverton Evangelical Lutheran Free Church, also organized a Canby congregation.

The Scandinavians now were not all being served by the Lutheran churches. The Methodist pastor was L.H. Pedersen, a Scandinavian. He later went to Alaska as a *Page Fifty-five* missionary. The Christian church, as well as the Methodist church, had Scandinavians among their members.

With improved financial conditions the churches were able to think about some expansions of facilities. The Scandinavian church began to complain before the interior of theirs had been completed that the facilities were too small. With a contribution of \$103 from the Ladies Aid, \$75 from the Young People's Society, and \$337 in subscription from members, this church - with help from the pastor who was to do some of the interior painting himself - built a parsonage in 1905 for \$875.71. The next year they built a barn, and the following year they decided to build a schoolhouse, 24 x 36 x 12 ft. Each male member who could not come to work was asked to hire someone in his place to help with the construction. The total cost for the barn was \$310.92.<sup>8</sup>

The ladies aids and young people's organizations had helping hands which became more and more important. Their activities contributed to the local church treasury, assisted with the pastor's salary, the parsonage debt, missions and equipment for the school and church kitchen and sent gifts to the children's home as well as made Christmas bright in their own congregation. The latter event was described as follows:

At the United Lutheran Church the exercises were also held on Monday afternoon. The windows were darkened and the tree illuminated with candles giving it the appearance of evening. On this, as on the other occasions, the tree was loaded with presents, the program good, and the attendance fully up to expectation.<sup>9</sup>

Americanization could not help but become more serious with them when the English language became more frequently used than their native tongues. Compulsory English at school was the first benefit. The church reached its dual status more slowly. The first newspaper account of an English service at St. John's

tells of an evening missionary service, August 16, 1902. The Young People's Society at the Scandinavian Lutheran Church decided to have the Scripture study in English for the first time Nov. 5, 1905. Subsequently, they decided to continue the English and also to buy English hymnbooks. The congregation used English for the first time at its morning service, July 10, 1910. After that it became customary to have one English service a month in the morning and one in the evening. The English language usage strengthened also through increased travel, with special rates for making trips to Portland, etc. appealing. The demise of *Skandia*, in the *Silverton Appeal* also indicated that new interests were gaining their attention.

Perhaps they were reaching a satisfactory mix of old world and American heritages, that is, Silverton Scandinavian environment, for the kind of living they wanted. Whatever their reasons, the majority of them had learned to love Silverton. This feeling was expressed many years later when Julius Alm was interviewed at the time of Bent Tingelstad's death. Alm said that now he was the oldest of those early pioneers. "Silverton has a generous supply of Scandinavians in it yet, and it is a good place to live."<sup>10</sup>

Theodore Blegen in *Grass Roots History* says that "the pivot of the story of American immigrant contributions is the usual, not the uncommon." True - these early Scandinavians were adventuresome in wanting to come to Oregon, but their story is mainly that of the usual. They were ordinary citizens in an ordinary community, but with their strong religious faith, their belief in the protestant work ethic, and their Scandinavian heritage of thrift, they made a unique contribution to their times and to future generations.

And there is a glamour which should cover their story for they were a people *Page Fifty-six* willing to take Paul Bunyan steps - leaving the left foot print in Scandinavia - the right foot print in "the East" and finally solidly planting both feet in Silverton, Oregon soil. Even the trees did not stand in their way.

For Oregon's history and Silverton's block in that patchwork quilt which is made of Oregon's many segments, the Scandinavians contributed some bright pieces which hopefully will not fade. Those of us of their heritage are most grateful for their addition to the story of this western land.

#### *Footnotes*

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8. *Ibid.*, p. 30-32.
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Bertha Alm  
Althea (Meyer) Borland  
Ida (Olsen) Dahl  
Julia (Julson) Dahl  
Alvina (Larsen) Flage  
Margaret (Wormdahl) Pincher  
Inga Goplerud  
Arthur Gottenberg  
Resale Gregersen  
Alma Halvorson  
Sylvia (Larsen) Halvorson  
Nettle Hatteberg  
Laura (Toft) Haugen  
Lucille (Benson) Holland  
Mabel (Evans) Holman  
Martha (Jensen) Isaacson

Clarice (Steen) Johnson  
Mrs. Henry Johnson  
Charlotte (Goplerud) Larsen  
Lillie (Madsen) Larsen  
Mabel Lindquist  
Ada Longberg  
Ruth (Brokke) Nelson  
Minnie (Funrue) Overland  
Theodore Opsund  
Albert Ramberg  
Chris Ramberg  
Emma (Hatteberg) Refsland  
Oscar and Emma (Moe) Satern  
Victor Sather  
Casper Towe  
Jennie (Palmquist) Weaver  
Adolph White