

Rolette County, North Dakota p. 172

The first Norwegian settlement in this region lies on the border of Rolette and Bottineau counties. In other words, some of the settlers made their home in Bottineau and some in Rolette, near Dunseith and Twala.

The brothers Claus, Godtfred and Sefanias Fuglestad from Birkrem, near Stavanger settled at Dunseith in 1882. Christian Cleveland from Grimstad settled at Twala in 1883. About the same time came K. Flaten, B. Flaten, Osmund Metvedt, Ole Metvedt and Knut Aaland, all from Telemarken, as well as Amund Rodton from Sætersdalen. Nearly all of the first settlers in these parts, one finds listed in Bottineau County. Wheat became the new settlers main item for sale and this they drove all the way to Devil's Lake by oxen.

In the spring of 1884 a band of Sioux Indians came and camped at Willow Creek, near the place where the Fuglestad brothers had raised their dwellings. Sefanias had his cabin right across the creek from the Indian camp. Across this creek (Willow Creek) there were a pair of logs serving as a bridge. The Indians made use of this bridge, one day when Sefanias was away. They had gone into his cabin and put poison in his food. (A Swede had seen them go in and out of the house, before they broke camp and left). Sefanias had no idea of the occurrence. When he came home, he sat to the table and ate of the poisoned food, and became instantly sick so he had to lie down. After a while his brother Godtfred came on an errand and found Sefanias struggling with death. He was unable to speak and died without explanation. But from what he had thrown up and from the Swede's account, gave the reason for his sudden death. He was buried on his claim under rather simple ceremony. The bitterness against the redskins was so great among the whites in the area that they immediately set out after them, but they had such a long lead into the forested mountains, that they could not find them. The Turtle Mountains were an excellent terrain for the Indians. Once, when K. Fuglestad went there to get a load of timber, 4 of these Sons of the Forest came and took hold of his oxen. But he was not frightened. He took a bar from his load and went after them and since they were not armed, they found it advisable to flee. During a similar incident, a large Gudbrandsdaling attacked them with a raised axe. Neither was he going to be bluffed.

Willow Creek Congregation, that was established at Willow Creek in 1885, was the first Norwegian congregation in this county. Its first priest was Theodor J. E. Tønnesen of The Norwegian Synod. The first church in the county was built by the aforementioned congregation in 1895. Now there are 8 congregations and 3 churches, 3 belonging to The Norwegian Synod, 3 to Hauge's Synod and 2 to The United Church.

John Bridston of Dunseith was the first Norwegian county official. He was elected Treasurer in 1890.

The first - and until now, the only Norwegian to represent the county in the State Legislature, was John Syvertsen, Willow City, elected 1896.

Post offices with Norwegian names; Kringen and Bertha.

Translated by Olaf Kringhaug
Vernon, British Columbia, Canada
Published by Olaf Kringhaug and Margit Bakke at
<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~maggiebakke/northdakota.html>
Email: margit@eot.com

The Hadeland Lag of America received permission to offer the Kringhaug translations in this format. No part of the Kringhaug translations may be reproduced or used for any commercial purpose without the written consent of the translator. Noncommercial use of content is permitted, as published or in a derivative work, if a proper citation is included. Proper citation should attribute the translation to Olaf Kringhaug and reference the URL of origin as shown above.