

# NEW LAND, NEW LIFE!

## Norwegian Immigration in Minnesota: 1825-1925

### OCCUPATIONS

Norwegian immigrants gravitated to former jobs once held in Norway. In Minnesota, their occupations included farming, forestry, sawmills, fishing, business, domestic service for single women, some mining, construction, and military service.

#### FORESTRY

Most lumberjacks were young, single immigrant men. Before Minnesota became a state, lumbering was primarily along the St. Croix and the Rum Rivers. In 1882, the biggest log jam on the St. Croix was a 9-mile pile-up of logs 7-feet high, making the river impassable.

In the 1880s, over the winter cutting time, men earned \$25 to \$30 a month in the North Woods of Minnesota. In the 1890s, lumbering reached its peak there. By 1900, it shifted to Beltrami, Itasca, and St. Louis Counties.

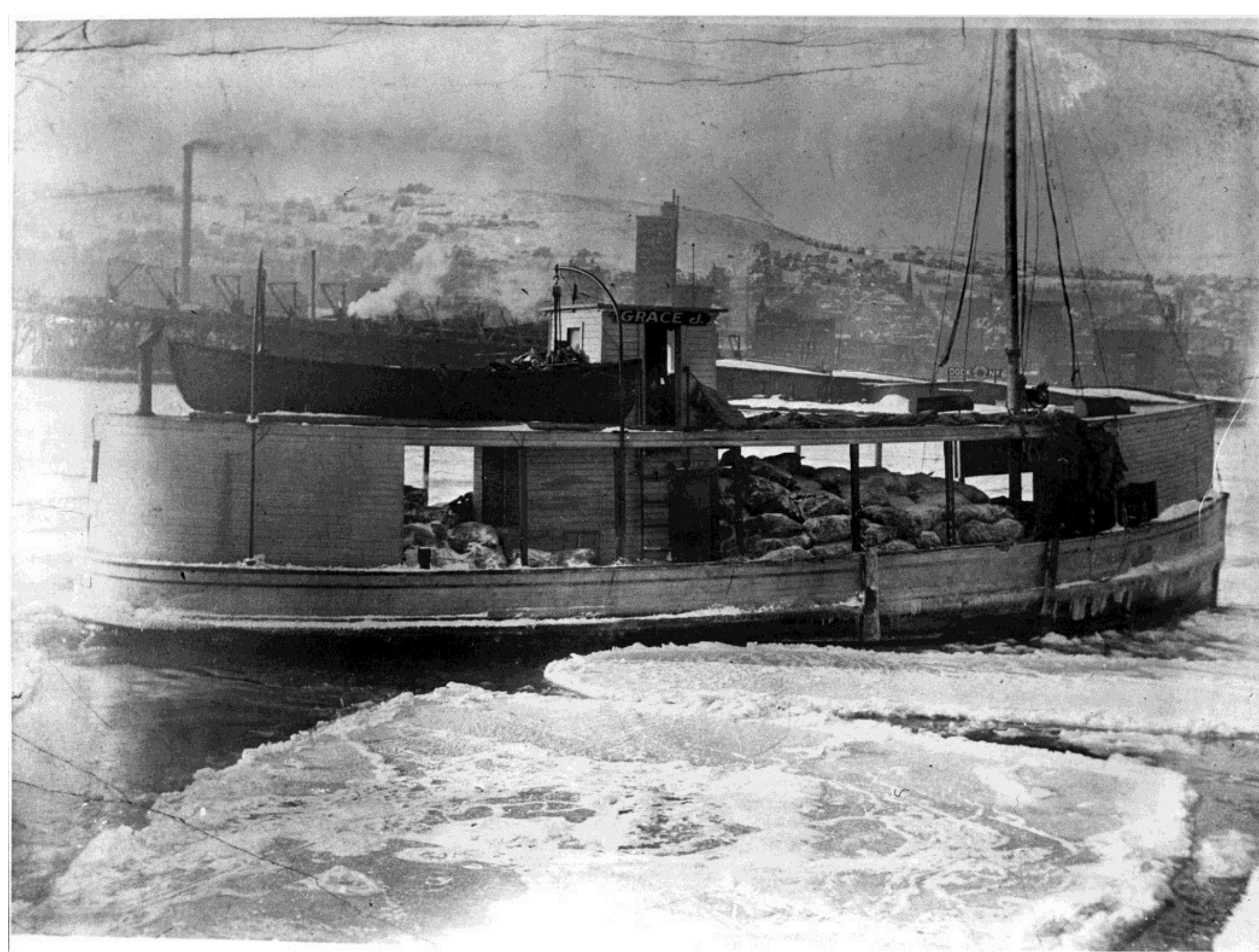


Norwegian-American Historical Association,  
St. Olaf College



#### FARMING

Over 800,000 Norwegians immigrated to America from 1825-1925, and a third settled in Minnesota. Most Norwegians farmed.



Fishing boat “Grace J”, owned by H. Christiansen,  
Incorporated, Duluth, Approx. 1915.  
Minnesota Historical Society

#### FISHING

Along the North Shore of Lake Superior, Tofte and Hovland were the main Norwegian fishing villages. Tofte was named for a pair of Norwegian brothers, who fished commercially in the 1890s. Norwegians also fished out of Grand Marais and Little Marais. At first, white fish and lake trout were the main catch. Later, herring became popular to catch nearer shore. Fishing by sailboat from Grand Marais was with hook line for lake trout, without nets, motors, or life jackets.



Fishing on ice along North Shore of Lake Superior.  
Date Approx. 1923. Minnesota Historical Society

#### ENTREPRENEURS

In 1871, brothers Enoch and Ole Hoiby (age seven) immigrated from Selbu, Norway, to Minneapolis. Their father’s death in a sawmill accident forced the family’s eight children to quit school and find work, as blacksmiths, in factories, and as seamstresses. Enoch started a wagon and carriage company, making commercial and specialty wagons. By 1889, Ole Hoiby ran his own shop and forge, building bicycles, metal parts, and art metal.



Hoiby Automobile Co., Specialty Wagon . 1890.  
Photographer: Palmer. Minnesota Historical Society .

#### DOMESTIC SERVICE

Norwegian single females often worked in domestic service. They had room and board, could learn English, and were generally paid \$3 per week with Sunday afternoons off.