

NEW LAND, NEW LIFE!

Norwegian Immigration in Minnesota: 1825-1925



Newspapers and Literature

NEWS

Letters were the most valuable and reliable source of news of the homeland. The Norwegian press became a clearing house for thought, a round-robin letter with news from settlements and Norway, and an introduction to literature. Norwegian literature was often published in newspapers to entertain in serial form (by chapter) and helped sell newspapers. Norwegian editorials tended to support reform and the rights of farmers and labor. Columns with farming advice and news of social and cultural events were popular.

The oldest Norwegian-American newspaper in the Midwest, Nordlyset (Northern Lights), began publishing in 1847 from Muskego, WI. Before 1865, most Norwegian papers were published in Wisconsin. In 1864 Fædrelandet was started in La Crosse, Wisconsin. By 1900, there were seventeen Norwegian-language papers in Minnesota, including Fergus Falls, Winona, Rochester, Duluth, and Moorhead. Folkets Røst (The Voice of the People, 1857-1858) was the first Norwegian newspaper printed in St. Paul. Nordisk Folkebladet (The People's Paper, 1868-1875, Rochester, later Minneapolis) printed scouting reports of the Red River Valley. Budstikken (The Messenger) was published from 1873 until 1894. (The term alludes to the wooden message stick sent from farm to farm in Norway to call a meeting.) In 1868, Faedrelandet merged with Emigranten to become Fædrelandet og Emigranten. It then merged with Minneapolis Tidende on October 7, 1893. After these mergers, the Minneapolis Tidende (The Times, 1887-1935) boasted the largest circulation in the upper Northwest.



Ogden Gunderson reading *The Farmer*. Date about 1922
Minnesota Historical Society



Norwegian-American Historical Association, St. Olaf College

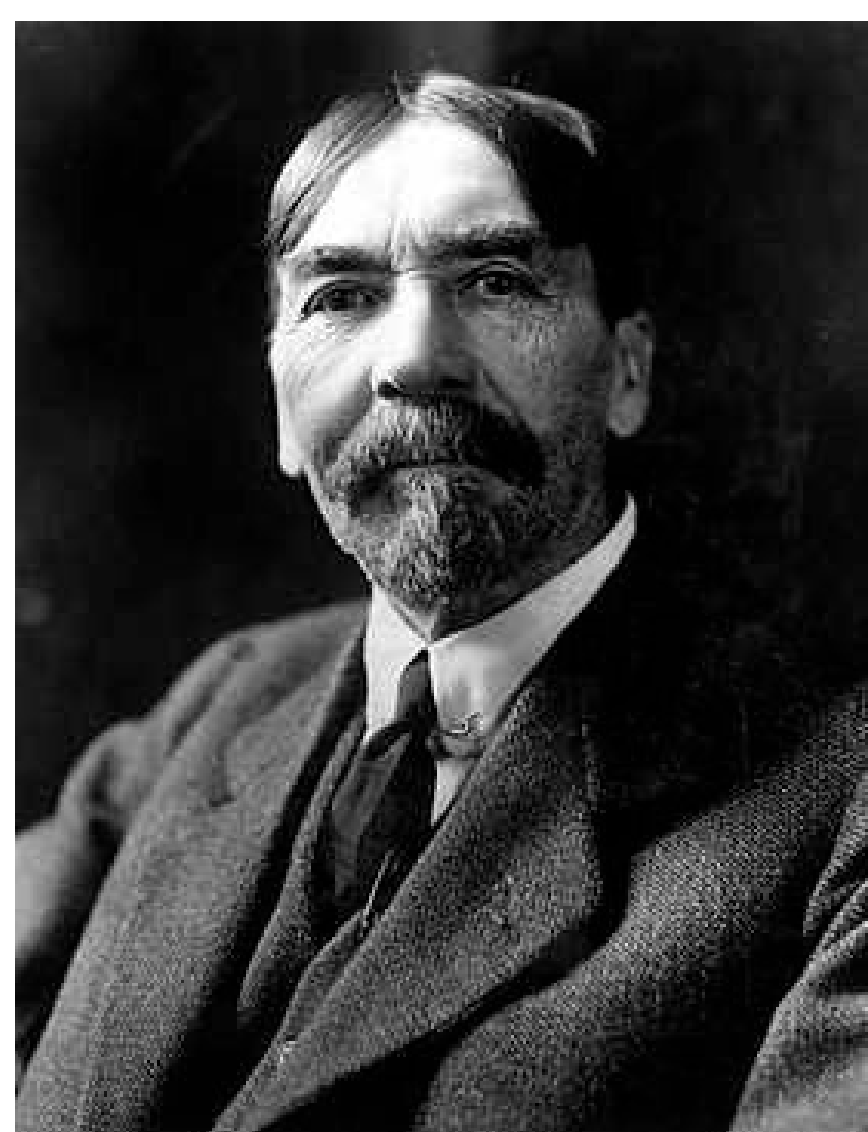
LITERATURE

Immigrants enjoyed folk tales from the homeland, which repeated four common themes: naughty trolls, strong women, naïve kings, and a “rag to riches” child. The Three Billy Goats Gruff was popular.



Ole Rølvaag
Norse-American Historical Society, St. Olaf College

Ole Rølvaag (1876-1931) emigrated at age twenty to work as a farm hand before studying in Minnesota and the University of Oslo. In 1906, Rølvaag joined the St. Olaf faculty, where he taught and wrote until his death. His immigration trilogy: *Giants in the Earth*, *Peder Victorious*, and *Their Fathers' God*, became world famous. The classic, *Giants in the Earth*, relates the Norwegian immigrant experience on the American frontier with stark honesty.



Thorstein Veblen
Wikipedia, a free encyclopedia

Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929), son of Norwegian homesteaders near Nerstrand, Rice County, Minnesota, was educated at Carleton College, John Hopkins, and Yale. With a doctorate in economics and philosophy, he became a professor at Carleton, University of Chicago, Stanford, and Cornell University. A prolific author economist, influenced by Darwin, he predicted war and depression. *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) and *The Theory of Business Enterprise* (1904) made him famous overnight. His work is still relevant to a global economy.



Drude Krog Janson
Norwegian-American Historical Association. St. Olaf College

Drude Krog Janson immigrated to Minnesota in 1880 with her six children to join her pastor-poet husband, Kristofer Janson. She was a novelist on the subject of women's rights and social causes. Her first novel, *A Saloonkeeper's Daughter*, was printed in four editions.

