

# NEW LAND, NEW LIFE!

## Norwegian Immigration in Minnesota: 1825-1925



### Why Norwegians Immigrated

- Rapid population growth in Norway.
- Lack of sufficient income in Norway to marry and start a family.
- 1851 U.S. treaties with the Dakota tribes opened the Minnesota Territory for settlers.
- Free or cheap fertile land. The Homestead Act of 1862 provided 160-acre farms. Immigrants could own a farm by either purchasing the land for \$1.25 per acre, or agreeing to build a house and farm the land for five years.
- Good wages for laborers on MN farms and in towns.
- Escape from rigid Norwegian social classes, where only the eldest male inherited family property.
- Religious freedom and no state church in America.
- Conservative movement of Norwegian landowners to preserve rural way of life and traditions.
- Letters, invitations, and prepaid passage tickets from Norwegian-Minnesotans to friends and relatives in the homeland.



Norwegian-American Historical Association, St. Olaf College

#### Religious Freedom



Immanuel Norwegian Church, Plummer, Red Lake Co., MN  
Norwegian-American Historical Association,  
St. Olaf College

**Railroads bought extensive tracts of land to resell to immigrants at a low rate. In return, new farms and communities meant more train travel of people and commodities.**



Minnesota Historical Society

#### Escape rigid social class system



Nasseret Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church, Trail, Pennington Co., MN  
Norwegian-American Historical Association,  
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Wood-cutting machine Norwegian-American Historical Association, St. Olaf College

