

NEW LAND, NEW LIFE!

Norwegian Immigration in Minnesota: 1825-1925



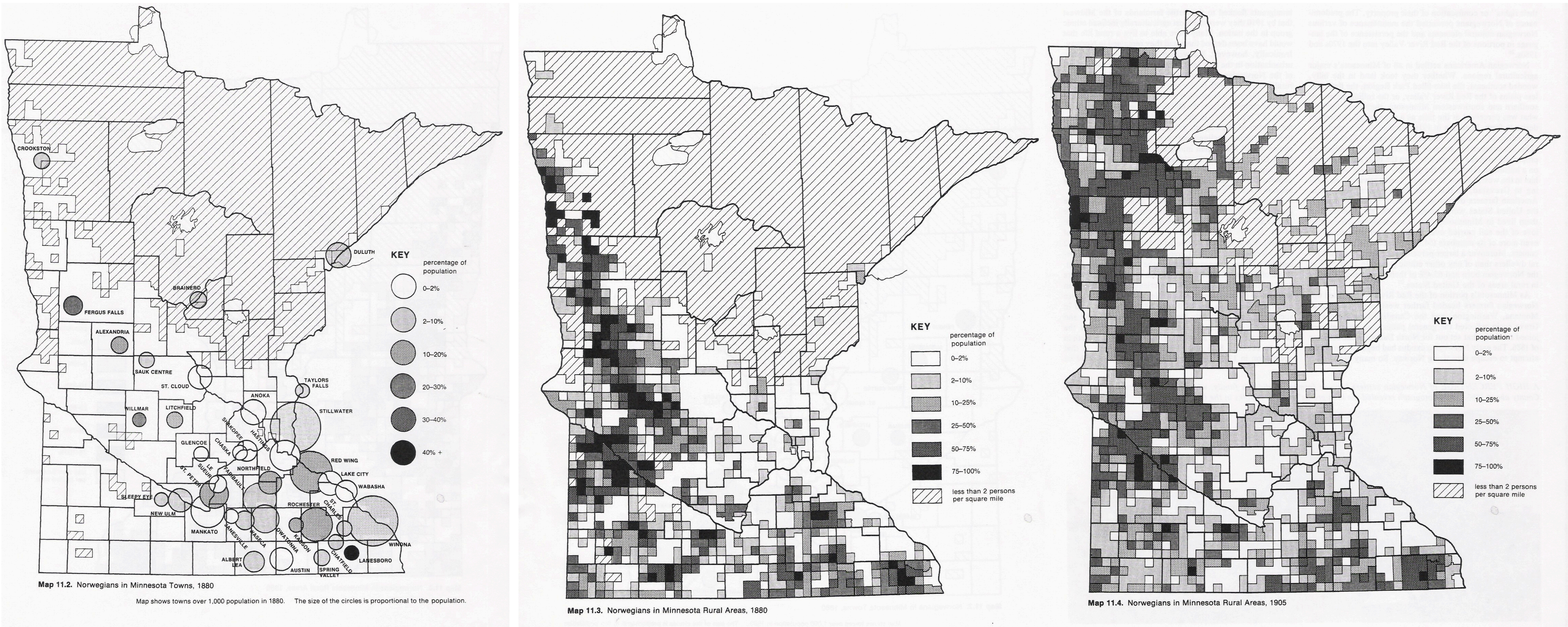
Chain Migration

Farming was the main occupation of Norwegian immigrants, who migrated up rivers and across prairies to better opportunities. Members of families — both nuclear and extended — often followed each other to an area like links in a chain. At first the male/female ratio was equal, and a third of Norwegian immigrants were under twelve.

Norwegians in Minnesota Towns, **1880**

Norwegians in Minnesota Rural Areas, **1880**

Norwegians in Minnesota Rural Areas, **1905**



From Qualey, Carlton & Gjerde, Jon. Holmquist ed. **THEY CHOSE MINNESOTA**, Ch. 11. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society

1. In the **1850s**, the first permanent Norwegian settlements were along the rivers in southeast Minnesota counties of Houston, Fillmore, Goodhue, Freeborn, Mower and parts of Olmsted, Rice, Faribault, Steele, and Waseca. Newcomers had learned some English and saved earnings, while staying with family in Wisconsin. Conditions there grew too crowded. Some had received prepaid tickets to emigrate directly for jobs on Minnesota homesteads.

In **1851**, Spring Grove Township in Goodhue County received some of the first permanent Norwegian settlers in Minnesota. Spring Grove became the most densely populated Norwegian colony in the U.S. and a major distribution point for Norwegian immigrants on their westward march. Some migrated west to open prairie in Blue Earth, Brown, and Watonwan Counties.

2. The state’s second major rural settlement developed in the late **1860s** in the Park Region area of west central Minnesota, encompassing the counties of Kandiyohi, Lac Qui Parle, Meeker, Douglas, and Ottertail.

3. In the **1870s** Norwegians settled the Red River Valley in Northwestern Minnesota, especially the counties of Clay, Marshall, Norman and Polk. Many came in ox-carts from southeastern regions of the state, inspired by Paul Hjelm-Hansen’s newspaper articles.

