

— SCANDINAVIANS —

Why did they come to North Dakota?

Scandinavians: for North Dakota that means Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, Icelanders, and Finns, descending in percentage of population. In the Old World, they fought each other for economic and political power for over 600 years, as only cousins will do. They share common language roots and the Lutheran religion. With six years of compulsory education and literacy requirements in their countries, most of the immigrants from Scandinavia were literate before their migration to North Dakota.

In 1910 the population of North Dakota had a Scandinavian complexion: Norwegians - 21.3 percent, Swedes - 4.7 percent, Danes - 2.2 percent, Icelanders - 0.5 percent, and Finns - 0.4 percent. By 1914 roughly 20 percent of all the farmland in North Dakota was owned by Norwegians. They farmed extensively in the eastern quarter, northwestern quarter, and north-central region of the state. Some came to North Dakota “fresh off the boat,” but the vast majority had lived in Minnesota, Wisconsin, or Iowa before moving west.

The multitude of churches dotting the skyline of North Dakota may, in part, be directly linked to the theological and reform conflicts in Scandinavia within the state-sponsored Lutheran church. As a result, many North Dakota communities have two or three churches, all founded by Scandinavian immigrants, each with different philosophical views.

Most Scandinavians adopted English within the first generation and created schools and hospitals to reflect their traditions. Unlike Germans from Russia, Scandinavians quickly embraced the American political tradition. By 1920, township, county, and state government was populated by Norwegians, Swedes, Danes, and Icelanders.

Source:

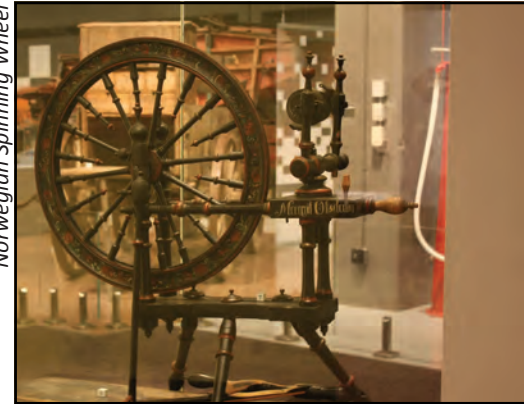
Playford V. Thorson, Scandinavians, in William C. Sherman & Playford Thorson, ed., Plains Folk: North Ethnic History, (Fargo, ND: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1988), pp. 183 - 257.

Don't miss the HOLLAND AUTOMOBILE!

Check out the Holland Special, a single-cylinder runabout, in the Corridor of History outside of the Inspiration Gallery!

This is the oldest-known surviving North Dakota-built automobile. Samuel Holland (1859-1937) was a Norwegian immigrant to Park River. A skilled blacksmith and machinist, he built at least six automobiles between 1898 and 1908. His Holland Special has a six horse-power engine, cushion tires, and bar-spring suspension. Unlike many early manufacturers of automobiles who usually purchased engines, Holland built this automobile's engine and most of the body. It sold for \$700, a price beyond the range of many families. He continued to build cars until 1908, then began selling cars manufactured by larger companies.

Norwegian Spinning Wheel



SHSND 0032-RO-11-08



Holland Special



— SCANDINAVIANS —

Explore these Scandinavian Objects in the Inspiration Gallery

▶ ENCOUNTERS

Norwegian Trunk, 1868

name and date. This trunk belonged to Gudelmine Johannesdotter, a woman who immigrated to Mountain, ND, an Icelandic community.

▶ AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION

Advance Threshing Machine, 1904

Purchased by Sven Carlson, Norwegian emigrant, from Lanterman Lumber Yards, Mandan, for \$750.

Flail and Pitchfork, circa 1884

Made and used by John A. Karlson, a Swedish emigrant, on his homestead in Burleigh County.

▶ NEWCOMERS AND SETTLEMENT

Tools for Building and Maintaining Steamboats, 1884-1901

Used by Charles L. Hansen, a veteran of the Danish and US navies. A carpenter by trade, he built and repaired steamboats along the Missouri River.

Coffee mill, 1876

A treasured item brought to America from Iceland by Rannveg Gunlogson.

Icelandic Trunk, 1879

Immigrants carried their worldly possessions over long distances in trunks like these. Trunks were often decorated and included their owner's

Sewing Machine, 1870-1879

Given to Ingebjurg Arnason shortly after she immigrated from Iceland in 1878. She used this machine to sew for her two sons and 11 daughters in Pembina County.

Wool Hand Cards

Stina Edman immigrated to Sergeant County from Sweden in 1885. She joined her husband, Gustav, who had established their homestead in 1882. Along with other household goods, she brought a spinning wheel and wool cards. The Edmans owned sheep, whose wool Stina spun and knit into items for her family.

Norwegian Mangle, circa 1850-1875

Mangles were used for pressing cloth. They were traditionally given by a man to the woman he hoped to marry. There's an old Norwegian saying, "Never trust a man with many mangles."

Wooden clogs, 1891

Some Norwegian immigrants continued to make their traditional style of work shoes after moving to North Dakota. Owned by Emil Austrom, Burleigh County.

Leather gloves, 1910

Worn by Lena Jorgenson when driving her horse and buggy

Norwegian Spinning Wheel, 1866

Immigrants brought the tools they believed to be most necessary to care for their families and continue their lives in new homes. This one was used by Margit Olsdattar. It is decorated in the Telemark style.

▶ WAR AND CONFLICT

Red Cross Uniform and equipment, 1918-1919

Born in Norway in 1885, Sarah Sand graduated from nursing school in 1915. She served as a nurse in France during WWI. After the war she worked at the Bismarck Hospital as a nurse.

▶ CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

Bunad, 1985-1995

Norwegian made using fabric and pattern ordered from Norway

Coverlet, 1850-1879

Norwegian
Donated by Dora Dahl Mundy

Knit gloves, 1900-1909

Norwegian

Trunk, 1860-1869

Norwegian

Coffeepot, 1863-1868

Norwegian

Rolling pin

Norwegian

Violin, 1890-1899

Norwegian

Originally owned by Sander Olson

Stockings, 1945-1950

Norwegian

Collar, 1850-1879

Norwegian

Sweater, 2001-2002

Norwegian

Boots, 1900-1940

Norwegian

Loom, 1880-1889

Norwegian

Made by Ole Solberg.

Painting, 1918-1940

Norwegian

Painted by Gustav I. Gullickson

Spinning wheel, 1870-1890

Swedish

Spinning wheel, 1870-1890

Swedish

Originally owned by Anna and Charles Johnson of Coteau, ND. Brought from Sweden between 1943-1946.

