

# The Journey to New Folden

## The First Arrivals

The first European homesteaders arrived in the autumn of 1882; none of them stayed the winter. The new arrivals included Ole Folden and Ole O. Lee who claimed land in the northeastern part of the township which they named "Humboldt Prairie." Others who claimed land were Hans O. Folden (Ole's son) and Mathias Hansen. Hans H. Saugen, Edward Nelson, Christian Hiaasen, and Nels Skaaras chose wooded land along the river in the northern part of the township. Skaaras created a primitive log shanty located in Section Eight between the river and its coulée (dugout) in the fall of 1882. This probably was the first permanent house in the area. Seventy-one year old Skaaras did not occupy the house until spring of 1883. Nine other men arrived that fall and selected land in the southern and western parts of the township. Many of these 17 men were bachelors and were all of Scandinavian background. Most were Norwegians and the others Swedes, so the Scandinavian language and customs were part of early life for the



*Visiting neighbors in the winter was often easier than trekking out during the warmer months when wagons were easily mired in mud on wet trails.*



*State of the art transportation in the late 1800s. Peter Anderson, his wife and children Clara, Alma and Emma.*

homesteaders. There were very few young children who were brought to the area, not surprising due to the challenges of establishing a way of life on the prairie.



## The Final Trek

Most of the newcomers arrived in Warren or Argyle by train. The final trek was usually undertaken on foot. Ole Lee and Christian Hiaasen met in Crookston, took the train to Argyle and then walked to the New Folden area. Section corners were marked by grass-covered mounds. Once they chose their plot, they marked their maps and returned to the land office to file claim.

## Getting to America

When Ole Lee made the Atlantic journey in May 1880 he traveled by way of England. The Kristiania steamship on which he was a passenger crossed the North Sea and landed at Hull on the British coast. There Norwegian travel agents met the passengers and escorted them to dinner. From Hull the emigrating group traveled by train through the English countryside to the busy seaport of Liverpool. Two days later a small ferry took them to the Spain, an ocean liner. The Spain stopped in Orvistad and with 2,000 anxious emigrants they began the trip across the Atlantic.

Ole Lee wrote in his diary, "The accommodations on our ship are very good and I appreciate the concern for cleanliness, good order, good meals and health care." Passengers on the Spain were served three meals a day and included soup, potatoes, pork, wheat bread, wheat cakes, salt fish and tea. Passengers enjoyed the fresh sea air and sun, but storms were common and caused much discomfort. The total transportation cost for Ole Lee's trip from Nes, Hallingdal, Norway, to Spring Grove, Minnesota, was \$195.25.

It took two to three weeks to make the journey across the Atlantic. Young children were especially at risk.



*The first car, an Auburn, in Newfolden owned by Harry Miner. Circa 1910s.*

*"Every day people from the Scandinavian countries arrive in Warren on the train from St. Paul. They come to stay. They come to improve and build up the country and the industries."*

*The Warren Register*