

Norwegian- American Essays 2011

“Transnationalism and the
Norwegian-American Experience”

Øyvind T. Gulliksen, Editor

Harry T. Cleven, Assistant Editor

Northfield, Minnesota
Norwegian-American Historical Association
2011

*Localizing Transnational Norwegians:
Exploring Nationalism, Language, and
Labor Markets in Early Twentieth Century
North Dakota*

Karen V. Hansen and Ken Chih-Yan Sun

In recent years, transnationalism has become an influential and contested concept within the field of international migration. In general, transnationalism can be defined as immigrants' incorporation of activities, routines, and institutions from their country of origin to shape their perception, desires and practices in their new country.¹ Transnationalism involves the migrants' tangible cross-border activities that maintain affective and cultural connections with their homeland. As scholars of immigrant transnationalism maintain, the practices and identities of migrant populations cannot be understood accurately without considering these cross-border connections.² Even though some migration scholars point out that many immigrant groups have maintained cross-border ties throughout history,³ others argue that the concept of transnationalism provides a useful analytical lens to illuminate practices that have been ignored or insufficiently theorized.⁴ Yet at the same time, other migration scholars contend that the use of transnationalism in the immigration literature is problematic and tends to view anything *international* as *transnational*.⁵ Roger Waldinger and David Fitzgerald note that discovering "connections between villages or communities here and there hardly qualifies as transnational, as the same relationship reoccurs within almost any domestic or international migration."⁶ Instead, they suggest that the concept of "bi-localism" can better capture "the interaction between the immigrants and their connections still at home."⁷

We approach the case of Norwegian immigrants to North Dakota with the question of whether the concept of transnationalism or bi-localism provides the most useful analytical lens.⁸ Because this question requires parsing levels of attach-

ment,⁹ we examine how the interplay of local and national factors sustained material and cultural trans-border ties. At the same time, by analyzing Norwegian immigrants, who generally are taken as a prototypically successful white European immigrant group, we want to challenge assumptions not just about the ease of assimilation to U.S. culture, but its desirability from their perspective.

Shifting the Focus to Cross-Border Connections

Migration scholars have long debated how migrants' relationships to home and their host society might change over time. In the debates about how immigrants adapt to institutions and communities in the U.S.,¹⁰ some migration scholars predict that assimilation is the unintended consequence of immigrants' attempts to gain an economic foothold (e.g., by getting a good job or an advanced education).¹¹ Some intentionally stand apart, maintaining segregated communities and separate cultures. Yet other groups set out to assimilate; and still others become American by integrating into the underclass and experiencing downward mobility.¹²

More recently, scholars have attended to the ways that immigrants have simultaneously become part of the U.S. and yet continue to be active members in their home societies.¹³ They argue that the development of communication, information, transportation and globalized capitalism to a great extent improve and facilitate the processes of connection.¹⁴ As a result, the possibility that immigrants live "lives that incorporate daily activities, routines, and institutions located both in a destination country and transnationally" becomes central to an analysis of immigrants' identities and practices.¹⁵

To this point, the growing body of literature on transnationalism attends to the exchange of ideas, information, goods, money, and people through migrants' cross-border ties.¹⁶ Many immigrants seek to reestablish and reaffirm their sense of self and resist the racialized, gendered and class-biased discrimination against them by remaining connected to the communities in their home society. For example, Peggy Levitt vividly demonstrates how Dominican migrants face racial discrimination in the United States, which reinforces attachments to their homeland. There, because they are members of



PHOTO: NORWEGIAN EMIGRANT MUSEUM NEGATIVE U00291

Pioneer Halvor Bøe's first home in Edmore, North Dakota. The infant is wearing a christening gown.

a dominant group, they can easily reclaim their racial superiority.¹⁷ Hung Thai similarly underscores that given economic disparities; many low-wage Vietnamese men convert their meager U.S. income into generous economic remittances and enhance their masculinity and marriageability in Vietnam.¹⁸ In effect, these transnational linkages are not supplementary but central to immigrants' subjectivities in the U.S.

Others emphasize how various beliefs, feelings, and practices can "travel" from a sending country to a receiving country.¹⁹ In this vein, Diane Wolf argues that immigrants' "homes" in different locations "exist not only geographically but also ideologically and emotionally, in addition to a plurality of cultural codes and symbols that go beyond the nation-state."²⁰ By illuminating how immigrants selectively bring memories, social categories and cultural codes to new communities, these scholars astutely demonstrate that transnationalism takes place "not only at the literal but also at the symbolic level—at the level of imagination, shared memory, and 'inventions of traditions.'"²¹

Transnational connections are not new. Turn-of-the-twentieth century Norwegian immigrants experienced significant

changes and exhibited many characteristics that in the early twenty-first century would be called transnational. In comparison with the generations before them, they engaged in enhanced modes of communication—cheap mail, the telegraph, and the telephone. The development of technology, particularly extended train routes and enhanced trans-Atlantic ship travel, made migration across national borders and continents easier than for their parents and grandparents. And importantly, their livelihoods were profoundly shaped by global political and economic developments—evident in the world market for commodities (such as grain), labor demands that resulted in massive flows of people across borders, international political conflict (the Great War), and a global health pandemic (Spanish Flu of 1918).

Here we investigate the everyday practices of primarily foreign-born first- and American-born second-generation Norwegian immigrants through their celebration of the Norwegian Constitution, their embrace of the Norwegian language on U.S. soil, and their activation of transnational labor pools. We seek to refine the notion of transnationalism by demonstrating that a rural local context can facilitate the formation of a transnational social field in which migrants live. Moreover, our case reveals the ways in which Norwegians rejected some aspects of American culture and the use of English, maintained strong ties to Norway, and still strove to become naturalized U.S. citizens and participate in American political processes. Understanding them as transnational emphasizes the variation in Norwegian immigrant experiences.

To understand their everyday practices, we have sought primary sources that illuminate the conditions of their lives and their perspectives on American culture, work, and life. We have scrutinized plat maps of land ownership; read newspaper articles, town histories, and memoirs; scoured archives for letters; and dug through manuscript censuses.²² The scarcity of written first-person narratives from this period has prompted us to turn to oral histories. Drawing on Karen V. Hansen's larger project on coexistence between Scandinavian settlers and Dakota Sioux in the region,²³ this article focuses on a subset of oral histories that constitute the centerpiece of her book. Over the last decade, Hansen has conducted thirty-five oral

LOCALIZING TRANSNATIONAL NORWEGIANS



PHOTO: PER MÆHLUM/NORWEGIAN EMIGRANT MUSEUM NEGATIVE U00853

Norwegian immigrants with their Native American neighbors, Kathryn, North Dakota, 1909-10.

histories, sixteen of which were with first-, second-, and third-generation Norwegian immigrants.²⁴ In addition, our analysis draws from forty-six oral histories with Norwegian-Americans based in Benson, Eddy, and Nelson counties of North Dakota, conducted by the North Dakota Oral History Project in 1975-1976. The majority of these were second-generation Norwegian-Americans who had at least one parent born in Norway and identified as Norwegian, although four interview subjects were born in Norway. Slightly more interviews were conducted with men than with women. The corpus of oral histories is an invaluable resource representing several generations of narrators, with subjects born as early as 1878, and speaks to change over time.

Everyday Practices

The landscape of the “prairie mosaic” put ethnicity and ancestry on the top of people’s minds in daily exchanges.²⁵ Since its territorial days, North Dakota was a land of people in transition. By 1910, the vast majority of the North Dakota population (71.7%) was of foreign birth or parentage. Foreign-born whites (27.1%) combined with whites of foreign or mixed (for-

eign and native-born) parentage (43.5%) significantly outnumbered native-born whites (28.2%). Native American Indians constituted only 1.1 percent of the whole population and lived primarily on reservations. Of those foreign-born whites, 29 percent were born in Norway and another 8 percent in Sweden and 3 percent in Denmark. Twenty percent of the foreign born were from Russia, although most of those were ethnically German (Germans from Russia), and another 10 percent were from Germany.²⁶

In this land of displaced people where many spoke languages other than English, the question of national ancestry represented a primary concern. Ancestry was invariably part of the conversation in the oral histories, in ways both prompted and unsolicited. In his booming auctioneer's voice, Gust A. Berg, a second-generation Swedish American, bluntly asked his interviewer: "What are you?"²⁷ This question assumed the ethnic geography of the state where visible markers of culture carried forward for generations. In the process, however, national heritage located people. It provided a point of reference, a mooring, placing people in history as well as on the globe. Similarly, in Dhooleka Raj's contemporary study of the South Asian Diaspora, people regularly queried, "Where are you from?"²⁸ They asked with the intention of marking difference or foreignness. In other words, immigrants attributed the observed and imagined differences to foreign national cultures and developed a "nostalgia for culture" to explain these differences. Like migrants of other ethno-national origins, Norwegian immigrants attempted and desired to identify their co-ethnics in North Dakota.

Ethnicity, fluid and variously constructed, had social consequences because it was socially recognized. Studies of North Dakota consistently find the enduring imprint of ethnicity over several generations—in shaping concentrations of land holdings, political mobilization, religious observance, and the gendered division of labor.²⁹ Moreover, studies of North Dakota have demonstrated that preference for ethnic communities is visually evident in patterns of settlement and landowning.³⁰ In exploring the emigration of communities of people from Norway, Jon Gjerde finds that "Norwegian settlements—like those of other ethnocultural groups in the rural Upper Mid-

west—were often tightly knit communities which practiced many customs from the Old Country. The transplantation of custom, moreover, was enhanced, especially in those many settlements composed of people who came largely from one particular locale in Europe.”³¹ As he demonstrates, the formation and endurance of Norwegian immigrant communities has been linked to a preference for people inheriting the same ancestral and cultural traditions, such as shared language and religion.

The Formation of Bi-National Identities: Allegiance to Norway and the U.S.

The question of national allegiance presses upon migrants as they leave one country and move to another. In exploring the “transatlantic linkages” between Norway and Norwegians on U.S. soil, Gjerde finds that “Rather than competing, the dual loyalties to nation and subgroup, invented under the auspices of an American creed, could be complementary.”³² In effect, immigrants and their children “maintain allegiances to the United States and to their former identities outside its borders.”³³ This idea of dual affiliation, Øyvind Gulliksen refers to as “twoness.” With a “twofold identity,” immigrants could embrace their new country, while simultaneously believing that “the old world was not to be discarded but would remain an inspiration and source of pride in the new.”³⁴ The resulting culture of affiliation Gjerde described as a “Norwegian ‘nation’ in the United States.” In contrast, Gulliksen calls the dual attachments postnational, claiming that the “successful adoption of two *cultures*,”³⁵ rather than two countries reframes the meaning of nation-state. They both astutely observed the reconstitution of migrants’ national identities in the process of international migration and relocation. As they point out, Norwegian immigrants’ deep ties to history, land, and kinship in the homeland profoundly shaped their outlooks, frames of reference, ways of thinking, and ancestral attachments. Further, our study highlights that while Norwegian immigrants simultaneously sought to maintain affective and cultural connections with their homeland, they also fostered new identification with the U.S in the specific social-economic contexts of North Dakota. In other words, Norwegian immigrants’ loyal-

ties to their ancestral and destination countries did not necessarily contradict each other. Nor were immigrants' attachments to sending or receiving contexts less important in their everyday lives. Rather, immigrants' relationships to their home and host societies were transformed and gained differential significance in the process of dislocation and resettlement.

The historical backdrop to these loyalties importantly explains part of the immigrants' fervent feelings about the emergent nation they were leaving. As a colonial power, Denmark had long expropriated natural resources from Norway and defined high culture and proper language as Danish. In 1814, when Denmark lost Norway to Sweden, Norwegians wrote their own constitution. However, it was not until 1905 that Norway actually gained independence from Sweden.

As historian Anne-Lise Seip demonstrates, the signs of nationalism—such as the attempts to establish an independent political system, the quest for national identity based on a common past and common culture, the invention of traditions and symbols to serve the purpose of strengthening the nation-building—can be traced and identified throughout the course of nineteenth-century Norway.³⁶ During that time, many writers, artists, and activists sought to establish and reaffirm Norwegians' sense of national identity by claiming that Norwegian, Danish and Swedish people were of distinctive racial origins and did not share an ancestral history.³⁷ Moreover, the romantic nationalist movement embraced the centrality of the rural peasantry in Norwegian culture.³⁸

The political events that led Norway to become a nation-state fostered a sense of national pride and unity, which inspired those emigrating as well as those who remained. The waves of immigration, cresting in the early twentieth century, launched a flow of people who carried these sentiments to the U.S. As historian Odd Lovoll puts it, "The struggle for national recognition, against stronger Scandinavian neighbors, made Norwegians fiercely patriotic."³⁹

A debate raged within the Norwegian-American community as a whole about how to express that patriotism, what role it had in the U.S. context, and the merits versus the dangers of blending into American society.⁴⁰ Many rejected the dominant American ethos of abandoning their culture of origin and dis-

appearing into the cultural mainstream. They argued that the multiplicity of people who brought the best of their culture with them enriched U.S. civic life. Echoing the cultural pluralist positions of influential Norwegian-American writers, Ole Rolvaag and Waldemar Ager, a first-generation immigrant farmer, Rasmus Yri, forcefully justified his affinity with two countries in his unpublished memoir: "We hear so much about being 100 percent American. My contentions are that if one is ashamed or belittles his Fatherland, then he is not to be trusted in his adopted country."⁴¹ From his perspective, his loyalty to Norway enhanced his ability to contribute to the U.S. polity.

Unlike the immigrants themselves, the second generation had to visualize Norway through stories; Norwegian culture was not something they could taste and feel. The children of immigrants were born into America, where, shaped by their parents' attachment to ancestral history and culture, they learned English in schools but had to discover Norway through attending church, reading literature, and listening to their family lore. Second-generation Norwegian American, Dagny Skurdell Bilden, who grew up in Nelson County, recalled that after school, the girls in her family would come home to do mending with her mother. "Just as it was getting dusk, she'd say, 'It's *'skreddertime'* now girls, put away the work.' This meant it was 'tailor's hour', or the time before they lit the lamps. Then, she would tell stories of their life in Norway and the early years on the farm."⁴² Norway the country loomed large, and yet most would never visit—they were poor people and lacked sufficient economic resources to travel back to their homeland. So they had to imagine and interpret, in light of what they observed in their families and communities and through the lens of their American education.

Immigrants brought observances of Constitution Day, *Syttende Mai*, to the U.S. with them. In her biography of her Norwegian immigrant mother, writer Carrie Young observed the contradictory gaps in local cultural practices in North Dakota. Unlike the Fourth of July, which was a family holiday, *Syttende Mai* was a male celebration because it involved drinking, and "the women looked the other way and tried to ignore it."⁴³ Nonetheless, the men would go to town and toast *Gamle Norge*,

and as the day wore on, emotionally swearing deathless allegiance to the beautiful Old Country, on which most of them—the sons of immigrants—had never laid eyes.”⁴⁴

In her own account, American-born daughter of Norwegian immigrant farmers, Ruth Dahlen, wrongly equated the 17th of May with U.S. Independence Day. The Fourth of July was widely observed with picnics, competitive athletic events, and often Indian dancing, to celebrate the forging of a new nation. Relying on her child’s eye view of 1914, Ruth described the events of her school in the town of Michigan, North Dakota: “That was a big year for Norway. She was celebrating her 100th year of independence from Sweden.” Actually, it was the centennial of the Norwegian Constitution. Nonetheless, Ruth Dahlen’s memory was marked by the event staged by her Bible school. “The teacher then, trained us in some songs. And we had a flag drill. And half of us carried the American flag and other half the Norwegian flag. Good sized flags, real nice. We marched from the school house to the church.”⁴⁵ Here, in her memory of the march, the flags symbolized the “twoness” of national affinity, bringing recent immigrants, long-time residents, and children of the foreign born to celebrate the accomplishments of Norway while in the United States.

Ethnic communities in the U.S. often clustered neighbors and kin from the same valleys and even farms in Norway. Knowing the power of place, Norwegians organized the *bygdelag*, one of the most popular and active types of Norwegian-American associations in the U.S. The *bygdelag* was a “society of immigrants from a particular settlement, group of settlements, some general district, fjord, or valley in Norway, and of their descendants in this country.”⁴⁶ The local context mattered, as immigrants celebrated the places of their past, not strictly the nation state.⁴⁷ They provided a forum for exchanging gifts and visits back and forth across the Atlantic. These organizations, affecting up to 75,000 people and amounting to a social movement from 1905 through 1925, according to Lovoll, intended to connect old friends and neighbors. Collectively they held meetings, published newsletters, magazines and yearbooks, cultivated cooperation between immigrants and their home districts, and created an institutional structure that could endure over time. Importantly, in addition to

their social purpose, *bygdelags* were intended to “preserve and enrich” shared values in “language, history, literature, and art; promote a knowledge of an interest in the history of our people . . . strengthen . . . contact and fellow feeling with the land and people of our forebears.”⁴⁸ The maintenance of ancestral ties and education of the next generation tied a geographically-rooted organization to a national project.

At the same time, the strong sense of affinity for Norway co-existed with high rates of Norwegian naturalization in North Dakota. By 1920, the year the federal Woman’s Suffrage Constitutional Amendment was ratified, 83 percent of Norwegian immigrant women in North Dakota had already become naturalized citizens. This figure compares to 52 percent of foreign-born women nationally. Similarly, Norwegian men also became citizens at a rate much higher than other immigrant men, although at a rate lower than women: 76 percent of Norwegian men in comparison to 47% of foreign-born men nationally.⁴⁹ Clearly, while Norwegian immigrants held fast to their ancestry and mother tongue, they took seriously their membership in the polity. They recognized the importance of the franchise and of an electoral voice.

The social-economic context of North Dakota is key to analyzing the fact that its immigrants had high rates of naturalization, even in comparison to other states in the Midwest. North Dakota fits the pattern sociologist Irene Bloemraad describes as welcoming to immigrants.⁵⁰ In effect, Bloemraad claims that even after federal naturalization legislation, state culture and implementation of the law had an impact. “Local context did matter, and it mattered greatly.”⁵¹ We explain the even higher rates of Norwegian naturalization in North Dakota as the result of two related processes, both rooted in the land. First, the landtaking opportunity that drew Scandinavians to the Midwest, namely homesteading, required that the foreign-born claiming land formally register their intention to become naturalized citizens. Although homesteaders were not legally required to follow the process through to citizenship, many did. Homesteading acted as a major avenue to land ownership in North Dakota.⁵²

Second, local political mobilization prompted Norwegians above other national groups to become citizens. Bloemraad finds that political activity “engaged many would-be citizens,

spurring them to naturalize.”⁵³ Clare Hammonds and Karen V. Hansen explain the links between homesteading and citizenship by exploring the importance of the Nonpartisan League (NPL) in mobilizing farmers across the state to vote for agrarian reform.⁵⁴ In promoting the small farmer and promising to eliminate middle-men profiteering in the agricultural economy, farmers exercised their political voice, something that was possible only as citizens of their chosen country. Norwegians were disproportionately farmers in the state, and they posit, disproportionately active in the NPL.⁵⁵ By bringing their attachment to land and cultivating it, Norwegians gained access to the political process in the U.S. And because of the local activism that disproportionately fixated on agricultural issues, Norwegians were drawn into electoral politics in their new country. In effect, however ironic, land provided the impetus as well as the avenue for not only migrating but for switching citizenship.

Symbolic Connections to Norway: Language as a Cultural Arena

Linguist Einar Haugen argues that language is central to the development of Norwegian national and cultural identity.⁵⁶ As Haugen maintains, “As citizens of a young nation, Norwegians began searching for the cultural roots that had been cut over in the Middle Ages.” Further, he emphasizes that “among the several symbols of national individuality and independence, language was hit upon as one of the most important.”⁵⁷ Likewise, language became an important cultural symbol that Norwegian immigrants utilized to differentiate “us” from “them” in the process of displacement and relocation.

Fiercely insistent that language reflects culture, even those Norwegians who reported speaking English to census takers continued to speak Norwegian in their homes, churches, and communities. In fact, many Norwegians at the beginning of the twentieth century used language to bond with their co-ethnics, differentiate themselves from other racial and ethnic groups in the U.S., and reinforce their cultural connections to Norway. Barbara Handy-Marchello writes, “Fear of losing one’s culture to English-language and American customs or to other European immigrants motivated settlers to build com-

munities with cultural boundaries.”⁵⁸ Duane Lindberg finds that while Lutheran churches varied in when they switched from Norwegian to English in their public services and their congregational minutes, the tipping point tended to occur in the 1930s.⁵⁹ If most immigrants in North Dakota looked “white” or similar to Yankees in terms of their racial phenotypical features, language might have been even more important in identifying who belonged and who did not. In this sense, language became a “migrating” identity marker that served the function of delineating the boundaries of Norwegian communities, illuminating their ties to the homeland.

Most notably, the importance of bilingualism in the rural settings of North Dakota is not emphasized as much as that in urban Norwegian immigrant communities. John Jenswold chronicles how, in the 1920s, Norwegian immigrant leaders and newspapers in metropolitan U.S. cities such as New York City urged their co-ethnics, especially the younger generation, to simultaneously master the Norwegian language and English.⁶⁰ As Jenswold demonstrates, many opinion leaders in the urban settings worried that not knowing English would lead Norwegian immigrants to dead end jobs at the lowest level of the American economy.⁶¹ However, Norwegian immigrants in North Dakota sought to support themselves in the context of the rural agricultural economy. That is, most of these immigrants lived in isolated rural ethnic enclaves and did not have the incentives or opportunities to enter the industrialized workplaces like their counterparts in urban settings. Against this backdrop, Norwegian immigrants in North Dakota rarely regarded English fluency as essential to their survival or success in the United States. Instead, many of them viewed the continued use of their native language as central to transplanting Norwegian traditions onto American soil.

Furthermore, their use of native language can be understood in the context of a cultural alienation that they experienced in the process of relocating. Third-generation writer Barbara Levorsen told of the joy some settlers found in speaking with someone from the same valley in Norway, who spoke the same dialect and might have news of the folks back home.⁶² Simultaneously, the frustration that accompanied their lack of English skills reinforced Norwegian immigrants’ emotional



PHOTO: NORWEGIAN EMIGRANT MUSEUM NEGATIVE U00335

Maintaining the dignified traditions of the Old Country on the North Dakota prairie.

attachment to their native language.⁶³ The sting of not being able to speak the dominant language was powerfully told in an interview by first-generation immigrant farmer Ingemund Peterson. In 1915, Ingemund left Norway to join his brother who was employed as a farm laborer in Warwick, North Dakota. That winter they sought employment in the lumber industry in Montana. Ingemund spoke virtually no English, although his brother, Anton, who had arrived before him, spoke enough to get by.

“I couldn’t understand anything, but Anton, he been at it for many years, so he was quite a English. He could talk. But the boss, one day [they] come and took Anton someplace, gonna do something else, and the boss come over to me and started to [talk]. I was just standing there. I had nothing to say or nothing. I was just like a dead horse, standing there.”⁶⁴

Eighty-five years later, the burn of humiliation borne of not understanding English remained etched in Ingemund’s memory. Language was not only a means of communication, but also a cultural object that conveyed his non-native status and cultural subordination.

In addition, the discrimination that Norwegian immigrants encountered in the U.S. further motivated them to insist on using their mother tongue. By doing so, they used their native language to distance themselves from the ethnic hierarchy and reaffirm their cultural connection to their homeland.⁶⁵ A sec-

ond-generation Norwegian, Gurine Moe, who grew up on a farm in Nelson County where few children went beyond the fourth grade commented: "If we stayed home, no questions were asked."⁶⁶ She started school in 1896 at the age of six. "We didn't get very far, you know. Three months in the fall and three in the spring. And we couldn't read an English word. When we come home our folks didn't speak English. We spoke Norske. So by the time it started, we'd forgotten everything. And you know those old timers from Norway, they didn't care for this English stuff. 'This Jankee stuff,' they said. [Laugh]."⁶⁷ In this sense, immigrant parents sought to use language as a vehicle to establish and reinforce their children's ancestral identity. As many informants acknowledged during the interviews, English-speaking, native-born whites topped the ethnic/racial hierarchy. This group ran national government, held most elected offices, supervised public schools, and understood political and social systems. As the dominant group they were, presumably, to be emulated as well as feared. And yet, in her history of her Norwegian community, Levorsen described her mother's antipathy to Yankees and speaking English:

Mama had suffered some experience when she first came to America that had embittered her. I think it happened when she worked for an Irish section boss' family. She disliked my speaking American, discouraged it in any way she could, and instilled in me a feeling of inferiority toward "Yankees" that has been a battle to overcome.⁶⁸

Furthermore, the emphasis on the importance of using Norwegian shaped emotional and symbolic ties to Norway for the subsequent generations. A third-generation Norwegian American, Levorsen wrote, "To me English seemed like an anemic and ineffectual language compared to the robust Norwegian. Stories told in Norwegian were funnier or sadder or grimmer."⁶⁹ Because of the vitality and isolation of the language communities, second- and third-generation Norwegian Americans grew up speaking Norwegian. Levorsen observed, "Though my parents were born in this country, and even my great-grandparents are buried here, I had become in thought and speech an immigrant."⁷⁰ In effect, the cultural frame for Lev-

orsen's parents and hence Levorsen herself was rooted in Norway, at least the Norway that her grandparents had left and remembered.

Local Economic Needs and Transnational Social Networks

Finally, the agricultural economy of North Dakota is central to understanding why Norwegian immigrants sought to maintain their cross-border connections with family members and friends in the homeland. Owning land occurred within a context of social and economic relationships, constraints and opportunities. In an agricultural economy, Norwegian immigrants had to determine how to keep their land over generations—their farms and their children's future livelihood depended on it. Land choices were rooted in the kin-based, labor-intensive form of agriculture that Norwegians practiced, and oral histories attest to the importance of relatives in land choice.⁷¹ Geographic clusters of kin-owned land gave advantage to people who shared labor and farm equipment, which was too cumbersome to transport on bad dirt roads. Because of the acute labor needs, a premium was placed on the ability to muster workers, making kin a valuable resource in farm production.⁷² Living in the midst of a network of extended kin meant that farmers could share not only equipment and labor but also information and support. John C. Hudson notes the importance of "well-used information networks specific to ethnic groups which formed a bond between the widely scattered enclaves, and the usefulness of these informal networks in spreading information about economic opportunities when and where they arose."⁷³

Given this context, many Norwegians in North Dakota sought to recruit their overseas kin to meet their labor needs. The labor shortage in North America meant that farmers scrambled to hire people whom they knew to be reliable workers. This process directly connected a farm in North Dakota to a village or district in rural Norway. Virtual open doors to entry facilitated the transnational movement of workers, as did steam-powered ocean liners. As historian Ingrid Semmingen observed, "The individual Norwegian-American farmer received his younger siblings or nephews and nieces gladly, at any rate in good times. They could perform valuable services



PHOTO: PER MÆHLUM/NORWEGIAN EMIGRANT MUSEUM NEGATIVE U00828

Threshing on the prairie, about two miles from Kathryn, North Dakota, ca. 1910.

on the farm as long as they had the patience to stay.”⁷⁴ As the case with first-generation immigrant Johanna Tvedt, this arrangement often took the form of an agreement whereby a ticket for passage to the U.S. was exchanged for a year’s labor.⁷⁵ Johanna Tvedt was seventeen when she seized the opportunity to go to the U.S. Her eldest sister had already migrated to Nebraska and along with her new husband and sent a ticket for another sister to come. In Norway, their mother, a widow with nine children, did not have an easy time of it. Johanna had been working as a domestic servant. The sister who had been invited to the U.S. did not want to go, so Johanna stepped into her shoes. In 1905, she went straight to Kerney, Nebraska. However, only when she arrived in the U.S. did she realize that America was not the land of opportunity she had imagined but a place lacking resources and full of challenges.

America had appealed to Johanna because she thought that in a few short years she would become wealthy. Life in Norway had been constant work, but she found that it had been nothing compared to what was expected of her in America. Obligated to her sister and brother-in-law for the

price of the passage, they put her to work. The hired man was released so that Johanna would not suffer from idleness and besides her house work she cultivated corn and did other farm work generally required of a hired man. In only a matter of days Johanna found that America was not going to be such a paradise. In fact the lack of money made it impossible for her to even pay the postage for letters home, let alone return herself.⁷⁶

Once she worked off her passage, Johanna found a job as maid and eventually made her way to North Dakota. Often the employer who loaned the passage money was related to the worker. The kin relationship did not lessen the contractual obligation but rather strengthened it. *

Understanding the need for labor power in sparsely populated rural communities, kin folks in Norway would sometimes actively encourage people to migrate to North Dakota to help their overseas relatives who homesteaded land and farmed. As a Norwegian boy of sixteen in 1904, Nels Knudson deliberated about his employment prospects. He had a pivotal conversation with his mother: "I wanted to be a sailor. But she says 'No!' my mama did. 'I'm not going to sit up every night and wonder where my boy is. But you can go to North Dakota. You got two uncles over there.'" ⁷⁷ His job prospects were facilitated by his uncles—that special kin relationship—who sought workers in the U.S. context and found nieces and nephews back in Norway a ready source of reliable labor.⁷⁸ His mother, who apparently had veto power over his occupational choice, was willing to send him abroad to someone whom she knew. So Nels left for North Dakota and eventually became a farmer.

Similarly, a migrant Norwegian worker in North Dakota might help recruit a brother, sister, or cousin in Norway to their place of employment. After Anton Peterson had started working for H.C. Hanson in 1914, at Hanson's behest, he recruited his younger brother, Ingemund, and sister, Anna, to come from Norway. Hanson was what Ingemund Peterson called a "big man": he owned an impressive 320 acres and had a perpetual labor shortage on his farm. He consistently needed more farm workers and domestic help. International transportation and active kin networks extended his reach to the pool

of surplus labor in the Norwegian countryside. Ingemund and Anna joined Anton on the Hanson farm. The rest of their family—including the mother, father, and eight brothers and sisters—followed the next year, working as tenant farmers and day laborers in Benson and Eddy Counties. In these ways, familial networks extended across the ocean, acting as a motivator, facilitator, and placement agency for international migrants, and linked specific farms in Norway to particular farms in North Dakota.

In the early twentieth century, letters played a central role in facilitating communication and the transnational exchange of people, goods and information and in maintaining immigrants' material and affective connections with their relatives and friends in the homeland.⁷⁹ Literary scholar Orm Øverland has chronicled how "letters from the United States were a crucial factor in the growth of Norwegian immigration to the United States from its modest beginnings in the 1820s to its peak in the years before World War I."⁸⁰ According to Øverland, the decision about whether and when to migrate is often discussed in the letter exchanges between immigrants in the United States and their family members in Norway. Thus, Øverland argues that the letters simultaneously kept migrant and non-migrant populations informed about each others' situations and revealed the possibilities of starting a new life in another country. Using the example of Polish peasants in the United States, sociologist Roger Waldinger similarly argues that before the rise of new information and communication technologies, letters "did a remarkably effective job of knitting together trans-oceanic migration networks."⁸¹ In this sense, these letters not only provided vehicles through which family and friends dispersed in different corners of the world expressed concerns and emotional attachment to each other but also played an important role in influencing people's decisions about migration and relocation and their perception of and aspiration for lives across worlds.

Transnationalism versus Bi-localism

In this article, we have examined three ways Norwegian immigrants and Norwegian Americans maintained their connections to Norway—celebration of the nation-state, use of the

Norwegian language, and mobilization of networks to recruit migrant labor. Further, we highlighted how these transnational connections did not prevent Norwegian immigrants from becoming naturalized Americans. As we have shown, they have higher naturalization rates than other racial and ethnic groups, including other Scandinavians. Here, we return to the debate about whether transnationalism or bi-localism can better capture the cross-border connections in which migrants engage. Instead of making sweeping claims, this study underscores how the specificity of a local context is central to understanding to the formation of a transnational community.

Local contexts are indispensable for understanding the everyday practices of Norwegian immigrants in early twentieth-century North Dakota. One cannot understand Norwegians or Norwegian Americans without recognizing the power of place and the connections between the particular locations that people left and those that they came to inhabit. Their language and dialects were fundamentally shaped by geography in Norway; and even people's names were marked with the stamp of the farm on which they lived.

At the same time, the concept of bi-localism is limited by the parochialism it suggests. Even with the continuities in rural environments, profound differences transformed migrants' lives. Norwegians in the U.S. were shaped by the American economy, the political landscape, and the opportunities as well as dangers of large-scale, industrializing agriculture. Further, the bi-local lens runs the risk of drawing "no distinction between international migrants and internal migrants."⁸² International labor markets connected the local communities, but did so across national borders. The local was important, but within the context of nation-states and a global economy.

The alternative, transnational, emphasizes the national over the local dimension. To correct for this, rather than rejecting transnationalism, we can disaggregate the levels and processes of migrants' cross-border linkages. We argue that transnational best captures early twentieth century Norwegian immigrants and their descendents, as long as we root our analysis in the local and particular as well. At the turn of twentieth century they integrated themselves into U.S. society

and economy while sustaining ties to Norway. They maintained their language into the next generation; they celebrated their ancestry and marked the emergence of an autonomous nation-state. At the same time, they engaged in the electoral system of their new home. While they held fast to their ancestral identity, at an astonishing rate they became naturalized citizens. During the 1910s, they became politically active, successfully shaped the state legislative agenda, and challenged the industrial reorganization of agricultural production and distribution. In effect, they drew on their values and practices to mobilize and collectively negotiate improved terms for local farmers on the world market. In effect, these actions were locally rooted transnational processes.

Using a transnational perspective to understand the complexities of Norwegian immigration to North Dakota in the early twentieth century informs an analysis of contemporary immigration. By highlighting the bi-national connections of a group of earlier white European immigrants, we reveal ways they did not sever their ties to their homeland and were not seamlessly assimilated into American society. Much like contemporary calls for the acceptance of bilingual communities and multi-cultural practices, this study suggests that maintaining tangible or affective cross-border ties—such as the use of a language other than English and holding onto an allegiance to another nation—does not necessarily preclude immigrants' constructive engagement with American society. Rather, immigrants are prompted to sustain various cross-border connections to their hometowns and homelands in order to survive in the contexts that receive them. Comparative historical research enables us to examine and compare the mechanisms that cause the similarities and differences between migrants' transnational connections in the past and those in the present. In this way, we not only have the opportunity to understand history with greater nuance, but also gain significant reference points to rethink assumptions about immigrants within contemporary theoretical and policy debates.

Notes

¹Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick-Schiller, "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society," *Interna-*

tional Migration Review 38, no. 3 (2004): 1002-39.

²Peggy Levitt, *The Transnational Villagers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Robert C. Smith, *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

³Elliott R. Barkan, "Introduction: Immigration, Incorporation, Assimilation, and the Limits of Transnationalism," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 25, no. 2 (2006): 7-32; Roger Waldinger, "Immigrant 'Transnationalism' and the Presence of the Past," in *From Arrival to Incorporation: Migrants to the U.S. in a Global Era*, ed. Elliott Barkan, Hasia Diner, and Alan M. Kraut, 267-85 (New York: New York University Press, 2008); David Fitzgerald, "Beyond 'Transnationalism': Mexican Hometown Politics at an American Labor Union," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 27, no. 2 (2004): 228-47.

⁴Robert C. Smith, "How Durable and New Is Transnational Life? Historical Retrieval through Local Comparison," *Diaspora* 9, no. 2 (2000): 203-33; Robert C. Smith, "Diasporic Memberships in Historical Perspectives: Comparative Insights from the Mexican, Italian and Polish Cases," *International Migration Review* 37, no. 3 (2003): 724-59.

⁵David Waldinger and Roger Fitzgerald, "Transnationalism in Question," *American Journal of Sociology* 109, no. 5 (2004): 1177-1195; Barkan, "Introduction: Immigration, Incorporation, Assimilation, and the Limits of Transnationalism," 1182.

⁶Waldinger and Fitzgerald, "Transnationalism in Question."

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸Robert C. Smith, "How Durable and New Is Transnational Life? Historical Retrieval through Local Comparison," *Diaspora* 9, no. 2 (2000): 203-33; Robert C. Smith, "Diasporic Memberships in Historical Perspectives: Comparative Insights from the Mexican, Italian and Polish Cases," *International Migration Review* 37, no. 3 (2003): 724-59.

⁹Barkan, "Introduction"; Waldinger and Fitzgerald, "Transnationalism in Question"; Waldinger, "Immigrant 'Transnationalism' and the Presence of the Past"; Fitzgerald, "Beyond 'Transnationalism'."

¹⁰Herbert Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity," *Ethnic & Racial Studies* 2, no. 1 (1979): 1-19; Alejandro Portes and Julia Sensenbrenner, "Embeddedness and Immigration: Notes on the Social Determinants of Economic Action," *American Journal of Sociology* 98, no. 6 (1993): 1320-50; Richard Alba and Victor Lee, *Remaking the American Main-*

stream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

¹¹Alba and Lee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*.

¹²Portes and Sensenbrenner, "Embeddedness and Immigration: Notes on the Social Determinants of Economic Action"; Alejandro Portes, Patricia Fernandez-Kelly, and William Haller, "Segmented Assimilation on the Ground: The New Second Generation in Early Adulthood," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, no. 6 (2005): 1000-40.

¹³Linda Basch, Nina Glick-Schiller, and Christina Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation State* (Langhorne, PA: Gordon and Breach, 1994); Georges Fouron and Nina Glick-Schiller, "All in the Family: Gender, Transnationalism, and the Nation-State," *Identities* 7, no. 4 (2001): 539-82.

¹⁴Levitt and Glick-Schiller, "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society"; Nancy Foner, "What's New about Transnationalism? New York Immigrants Today and at the Turn of the Century," *Diaspora* 6, no. 3 (1997): 355-75; Steven Vertovec, "Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 2 (1999): 447-62.

¹⁵Levitt and Glick-Schiller, "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society," 1003.

¹⁶Levitt, *The Transnational Villagers*; Yen Le Espiritu, *Homebound: Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Smith, *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants*; Hung Cam Thai, *For Better or for Worse: Vietnamese International Marriages in the New Global Economy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008).

¹⁷Levitt, *The Transnational Villagers*, 109-111.

¹⁸Thai, *For Better or for Worse*.

¹⁹Diane Wolf, "Family Secrets: Transnational Struggles among Children of Filipino Immigrants," *Sociological Perspectives* 40, no. 3 (1997): 457-82; Espiritu, *Homebound: Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries*.

²⁰Wolf, "Family Secrets: Transnational Struggles among Children of Filipino Immigrants," 459.

²¹Espiritu, *Homebound: Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries*, 214. Also see Orm Overland, *Immigrant Minds, Immigrant Identities: Making the United States Home, 1870-*

1930 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000).

²²Karen V. Hansen and Mignon Duffy, "Mapping the Dispossession: Scandinavian Homesteading at Fort Totten, 1900-1930," *Great Plains Research* 18, no. 1 (2008): 67-80.

²³Karen V. Hansen, *Encounter on the Great Plains: Scandinavian Settlers and Spirit Lake Dakota, 1900-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

²⁴In line with other migration scholars we use first generation to describe the foreign-born immigrants and view their children as second generation and their grandchildren as third generation. Mary C. Waters, *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Nazli Kibria, *Becoming Asian American: Second-Generation Chinese and Korean American Identities* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

²⁵William C. Sherman, *Prairie Mosaic: An Ethnic Atlas of Rural North Dakota* (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1983).

²⁶U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1920* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1921).

²⁷Gust Berg and Annie Berg, *Interview*, Audio recording, 55A (Bismarck: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1976).

²⁸Dhooleka Sarhadi Raj, *Where Are You From? Middle Class Migrants in the Modern World* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003).

²⁹Barbara Handy-Marchello, *Women of the Northern Plains: Gender and Settlement on the Homestead Frontier, 1870-1930* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005); Robert L. Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire: The Nonpartisan League, 1915-1922* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985); Sherman, *Prairie Mosaic*.

³⁰Carlton C. Qualey, *Norwegian Settlement in the United States* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1970). William C. Sherman, *Prairie Mosaic: An Ethnic Atlas of Rural North Dakota* (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1983); William C. Sherman et al., eds., *Plains Folk: North Dakota's Ethnic History* (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1988).

³¹Jon Gjerde, "Chain Migrations from the West Coast of Norway," in *A Century of European Migrations, 1830-1930*, ed. Rudolph J. Vecoli and Suzanne M. Sinke, 158-81 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 158.

³²Jon Gjerde, "Transatlantic Linkages: The Interaction between the Norwegian American and Norwegian 'Nations' During the Century of Migration, 1825-1920," *Immigrants & Minorities* 20, no. 1 (2001): 24.

³³*Ibid.*, 25.

³⁴Øyvind T. Gulliksen, *Twofold Identities: Norwegian-American Contributions to Midwestern Literature* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 9.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 3.

³⁶Seip, "Nation-Building within the Union: Politics, Class and Culture in the Norwegian Nation-State in the Nineteenth Century." To be sure, historians might have different perspectives on how to theorize the rise of nationalism in 19th century Norway. See Szelagowska, Krystyna, "Contemporary Norwegian Historian on Norwegian National Consciousness in the Early Modern Era," *Acta Poloniae Historica* no. 98 (2008): 171-86. Here, rather than engaging with the debate on the formation of national identities in 19th century Norway, we intend to highlight how immigrants' perceptions of belonging to a national group can illuminate understanding their (re)construction of identities in the receiving contexts.

³⁷Olson, "Norwegian-American Historians and the Creation of an Ethnic Identity."

³⁸Seip, "Nation-Building within the Union: Politics, Class and Culture in the Norwegian Nation-State in the Nineteenth Century"; Olson, "Norwegian-American Historians and the Creation of an Ethnic Identity."

³⁹Odd S. Lovoll, "The Bygdelag Movement," *Norwegian American Studies and Records* 25 (1972): 3-26.

⁴⁰Odd S. Lovoll, ed., *Cultural Pluralism Versus Assimilation: The Views of Waldemar Ager* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1977); Øyvind T. Gulliksen, "Assimilasjonsprosessen i Waldemar Agers: Paa veien til smeltepotten," *Norwegian-American Essays, 2001*, ed. Harry T. Cleven, Knut Djupedal, Ingeborg Kongslie, and Dina Tølsby, 183-205 (Oslo: NAHA-Norway, 2001). Ole E. Rolvaag, *Concerning Our Heritage* trans. Solveig Zempel (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1998).

⁴¹Svanau Yri Horne and Beverly Kraus Horne, *Reminiscing with Svanau*, State Historical Society of North Dakota (Bismarck, ND, 1992).

⁴²James A. Skurdall, *Skurdall - Skurdell - Skurdahl: Emigrants from Sør-Fron to Dakota Territory: A Norwegian-American Family History* (Decorah, IA: Anundsen Publishing Co., 1999), 76.

⁴³Carrie Young, *Nothing to Do but Stay* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991), 125.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 125-126.

⁴⁵Helmer Dahlen and Ruth Dahlen, *Interview*, Audio recording, 677B and 678A&B (Bismarck: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1976). Ruth was 72 years old when she gave an interview in 1976, so she would have been twelve in 1914.

⁴⁶Lovoll, "The Bygdelag Movement."

⁴⁷Odd S. Lovoll, *A Folk Epic: The Bygdelag in America* (Boston: Twayne Publishers for the Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1975). Also see, Jon Gjerde, *From Peasants to Farmers: The Migration from Balestrand, Norway to the Upper Middle West* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁴⁸Jacob Hodnefield, "Norwegian-American Bygdelags and Their Publications," *Norwegian American Studies and Records* 18 (1954): 163-222.

⁴⁹U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1920* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1921). Norwegian women in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa, other states of dense Norwegian settlement, also had high naturalization rates (77.3%; 74.5%; and 74% respectively), but not as high as those in North Dakota. The men follow the same pattern, at slightly lower rates.

⁵⁰Bloemraad, "Citizenship Lessons from the Past."

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 947. Also, prior to 1924, states varied in their requirements for voting.

⁵²39% of the land in North Dakota was "successfully homesteaded," according to the Homestead National Monument of America, run by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. <http://www.nps.gov/home/historyculture/upload/Percentage%20graph.pdf>.

⁵³Bloemraad, "Citizenship Lessons from the Past," 945.

⁵⁴Clare Hammonds and Karen V. Hansen, "Women's Citizenship, Political Mobilization, and the Nonpartisan League in North Dakota, 1900-1925," presented at the Rural Women's Studies Association Conference, Bloomington, IN, 2009.

⁵⁵Torger Anderson Hoverstad, *The Norwegian Farmers in the United States* (Fargo, ND: Hans Jervell Publishing Co., 1915). In his 1993 Master's thesis, Daron Olson criticizes the findings articulated by Kathleen Moum, Robert Morlan and others, that the League was disproportionately Norwegian. Kathleen Moum, "The Social Origins of the Nonpartisan League," *North Dakota History* 53 (1986): 18-22;

Robert L. Morlan, *Political Prairie Fire: The Nonpartisan League, 1915-1922* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985). Using a sample of counties across North Dakota, Olson argues that the primary motivation for voting NPL was economic and geographic, not ethnic. Further, he maintains that the western counties in North Dakota, where there were higher concentrations of mono-crop (wheat) agriculture, poorer farms were more likely to vote socialist in 1912 and NPL in 1916. Daron W. Olson, "Norwegians, Socialism and the Nonpartisan League in North Dakota, 1904-1920: How Red Was Their Protest?" (M.A., University of North Dakota, 1993). The data that would definitively settle this dispute about ethnicity, membership in the League, and voting patterns across the state unfortunately does not exist. Nonetheless, we are convinced that because Norwegians were disproportionately farmers and mobilized behind a political party whose economic platform focused on agricultural reform and improving the viability of small family farms, Norwegian immigrants were motivated to participate in the electoral process. For extensive analysis of voting patterns on these issues, see Michael Paul Rogin, *The Intellectuals and McCarthy: The Radical Specter* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967). If Olson is right that Norwegians were equally active in the Independent Voters Association, established in reaction to the NPL, this only adds fuel to our argument.

⁵⁶According to Einar Haugen, Norway had sought to establish its own language system in order to establish cultural uniqueness and thus dissociate itself from Danish culture since 1814. Einar Haugen, *Bilingualism in the Americas: A Bibliography and Research Guide* (Gainesville, FL: American Dialect Society, 1956). ———, "Dialect, Language, Nation," *American Anthropologist* 68, no. 4 (1966): 922-35; ———, "Planning for a Standard Language in Modern Norway," *Anthropological Linguistics* 1 (1993): 8-21.

⁵⁷Haugen, "Planning for a Standard Language in Modern Norway," 110.

⁵⁸Handy-Marchello, *Women of the Northern Plains*, 108-09.

⁵⁹Duane Rodell Lindberg, *Men of the Cloth and the Social-Cultural Fabric of the Norwegian Ethnic Community in North Dakota* (New York: Arno Press, 1980), 209.

⁶⁰John R. Jenswold, "Becoming American, Becoming Suburban: Norwegians in the 1920s," *Norwegian-American Studies* 33 (1992): 3-26.

⁶¹*Ibid.*

⁶²Barbara Levorsen, *The Quiet Conquest: A History of the Lives and*

Times of the First Settlers of Central North Dakota (Hawley, MN: Hawley Herald, 1974).

⁶³Gjerde, "Chain Migrations from the West Coast of Norway."

⁶⁴Ingemund Peterson, *Interview by Author*, Audio recording, (New Rockford, ND: Karen V. Hansen, 1999).

⁶⁵In particular, during World War I, Norwegian immigrants were in an even more vulnerable position, since their language, culture and region were seen by patriots as too similar to those of the enemy camp of German. Carl H. Chrislock, *Ethnicity Challenged: The Upper Midwest Norwegian-American Experience in World War I* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1981).

⁶⁶Gurine Moe, Interview, Audio recording, 679A&B (Bismarck: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1976). ✧

⁶⁷*Ibid.*

⁶⁸Levorsen, *The Quiet Conquest*, 105-06.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 140-41.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, 141.

⁷¹Hansen and Duffy, "Mapping the Dispossession."

⁷²Hansen, *Encounter on the Great Plains*.

⁷³John C. Hudson, "Migration to an American Frontier," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 66, no. 2 (1976): 244.

⁷⁴Ingrid Semmingsen, *Norway to America: A History of the Migration*, translated by Einar Haugen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978), 105.

⁷⁵We have not found evidence of formal contracts; however anecdotally this arrangement seemed fairly common and bound the emigrant to the employer for a year, the amount of labor equivalent to the price of a ticket. The arrangement is reminiscent of redemption-exchange of colonial labor contracts. Sharon V. Salinger, *"To Serve Well and Faithfully": Labor and Indentured Servants in Pennsylvania, 1682-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁷⁶Johanna Tvedt, Interview by Mark Olson, typed summary of interview, North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies (Fargo, 1971), 3.

⁷⁷Mr. and Mrs. Nels Knudson, *Interview*, Audio recording, 685A (Bismarck: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1976).

⁷⁸Semmingsen, *Norway to America*, 105.

⁷⁹Orm Øverland, "Recovering Memories of Migration: NAHA and the Making of a Collection of Immigrant Letters in the Norwegian National Archives, 1923-1929," *Norwegian-American Essays 2008: Migration and Memory* 12 (2008): 189-214. Also see, Theodore C Ble-

gen, *Land of Their Choice: The Immigrants Write Home* (St Paul: University of Minnesota Press, 1955); Solveig Zempel, ed. *In Their Own Words: Letters from Norwegian Immigrants* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

⁸⁰See Øverland, "Recovering Memories of Migration," 189.

⁸¹Waldinger, "Immigrant 'Transnationalism' and the Presence of the Past," 272; William Isaac Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (New York: Knopf, 1927).

⁸²Nina Glick-Schiller and Peggy Levitt, "Haven't We Heard This Somewhere Before? A Substantive View of Transnational Migration Studies by Way of a Reply to Waldinger and Fitzgerald." In Working Paper Series #06-01 (The Center for Migration and Development, 2006), 5-6.

References

Alba, Richard and Victor Lee. *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Barkan, Elliott R. "Introduction: Immigration, Incorporation, Assimilation, and the Limits of Transnationalism." *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 25, no 2 (2006): 7-32.

Basch, Linda, Nina Glick-Schiller, and Christina Szanton Blanc. *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States*. Langhorne, PA: Gordon and Breach, 1994.

Berg, Gust and Annie Berg. "Interview." North Dakota Oral History Project, interviewed by Larry Sprunk. Bismarck: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1976.

Blegen, Theodore C. *Land of their Choice: The Immigrants Write Home*. St Paul: University of Minnesota Press, 1955.

Bloemraad, Irene. "Citizenship Lessons from the Past: The Contours of Immigrant Naturalization in the Early 20th Century." *Social Science Quarterly*, 87, no. 5 (2006): 927-53.

Chrislock, Carl H. *Ethnicity Challenged: The Upper Midwest*

Norwegian-American Experience in World War I. Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1981.

Dahlen, Helmer and Ruth Dahlen. "Interview." North Dakota Oral History Project, interviewed by Larry Sprunk. Bismarck: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1976.

Espiritu, Yen Le. *Homebound: Filipino American Lives across Cultures, Communities, and Countries*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003.

Fitzgerald, David. "Beyond 'Transnationalism': Mexican Hometown Politics at an American Labor Union." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 27, no 2 (2004): 228-247.

Foner, Nancy. "What's New about Transnationalism? New York Immigrants Today and at the Turn of the Century" *Diaspora*, 6, no 3 (1997): 355-375.

Fouron, Georges and Nina Glick-Schiller. "All in the Family: Gender, Transnationalism, and the Nation-State." *Identities*, 7, no 4 (2001): 539-582.

Gans, Herbert. "Symbolic Ethnicity." *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, 2, no 1(1979): 1-19.

Gjerde, Jon. *From Peasants to Farmers: The Migration from Balestrand, Norway to the Upper Middle West*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

—. "Chain Migrations from the West Coast of Norway." In *A Century of European Migrations, 1830-1930*, edited by Rudolph J. Vecoli and Suzanne Sinke, pp. 158-181. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

—. "Transatlantic Linkages: The Interaction between the Norwegian American and Norwegian 'Nations' During the Century of Migration, 1825-1920." *Immigrants & Minorities*, 20, no 1 (2001): 19-34.

Glick Schiller, Nina and Peggy Levitt. "Haven't We Heard This Some-

where Before? A Substantive View of Transnational Migration Studies by Way of a Reply to Waldinger and Fitzgerald." *Working Paper Series #06-01*: The Center for Migration and Development, 2006.

Gulliksen, Øyvind T. *Twofold Identities: Norwegian-American Contributions to Midwestern Literature*. New York: Peter Lang, 2004.

Hammonds, Clare and Karen V. Hansen. "Women's Citizenship, Political Mobilization, and the Nonpartisan League in North Dakota, 1900-1925." Presented at the meetings of the Rural Women's Studies Association. Bloomington, IN, 2009.

Handy-Marchello, Barbara. *Women of the Northern Plains: Gender and Settlement on the Homestead Frontier, 1870-1930*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005.

Hansen, Karen V. *Encounter on the Great Plains: Scandinavian Settlers and Spirit Lake Dakota, 1900-1930*. New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

Hansen, Karen V. and Mignon Duffy. "Mapping the Dispossession: Scandinavian Homesteading at Fort Totten, 1900-1930." *Great Plains Research*, 18, no 1 (2008): 67-80.

Haugen, Einar. *Bilingualism in the Americas: A Bibliography and Research Guide*. Gainesville, FL: American Dialect Society, 1956.

—. "Dialect, Language, Nation." *American Anthropologist*, 68, no 4 (1966): 922-35.

—. "Planning for a Standard Language in Modern Norway." *Anthropological Linguistics*, 1, no 3 (1993): 8-21.

Hodnefield, Jacob. "Norwegian-American Bygdelags and Their Publications." *Norwegian American Studies and Records*, 18 (1954): 163-222.

Horne, Svanau Yri and Beverly Kraus Horne. "Reminiscing with Svanau." Manuscript collection. Bismarck, ND: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1992.

Hoverstad, Torger Anderson. *The Norwegian Farmers in the United States*. Fargo, ND: Hans Jervell Publishing Co., 1915.

Hudson, John C. "Migration to an American Frontier." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 66, no 2 (1976): 242-265.

Jenswold, John R. "Becoming American, Becoming Suburban: Norwegians in the 1920s." *Norwegian-American Studies*, 33 (1992): 3-26.

Kibria, Nazli. *Becoming Asian American: Second-Generation Chinese and Korean American Identities*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.

Knudson, Mr. and Mrs. Nels. "Interview." North Dakota Oral History Project, conducted by Larry Sprunk. Bismarck: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1976.

Levitt, Peggy. *The Transnational Villagers*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

Levitt, Peggy and Nina Glick-Schiller. "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society." *International Migration Review*, 38, no 4 (2004): 1002-1039.

Levitt, Peggy and B. Nadya Jaworsky. "Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 33, April (2007): 129-156.

Levorsen, Barbara. *The Quiet Conquest: A History of the Lives and Times of the First Settlers of Central North Dakota*. Hawley, MN: Hawley Herald, 1974.

Lindberg, Duane Rodell. *Men of the Cloth and the Social-Cultural Fabric of the Norwegian Ethnic Community in North Dakota*. New York: Arno Press, 1980.

Lovoll, Odd S. *A Folk Epic: The Bygdelag in America*. Boston: Twayne Publishers for the Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1975.

—. *Cultural Pluralism versus Assimilation: The Views of Waldemar Ager*. Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1977.

—. "The Bygdelag Movement." *Norwegian American Studies and Records*, 25 (1972): 3-26.

Moe, Gurine. "Interview." North Dakota Oral History Project, conducted by Larry Sprunk. Bismarck: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1976.

Morlan, Robert L. *Political Prairie Fire: The Nonpartisan League, 1915-1922*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1985.

Olson, Daron W. "Norwegian-American Historians and the Creation of an Ethnic Identity." *Scandinavian Studies*, 79 (2007): 41-56.

Øverland, Orm. "Recovering Memories of Migration: NAHA and the Making of a Collection of Immigrant Letters in the Norwegian National Archives, 1923-1929." *Norwegian-American Essays: Migration and Memory*, 12 (2008): 189-214.

Peterson, Ingemund. "Interview by author." New Rockford, ND: Karen V. Hansen, 1999.

Portes, Alejandro and Min Zhou. "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 530, no 1 (1993): 74-96.

Qualey, Carlton C. *Norwegian Settlement in the United States*. New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1970.

Raj, Dhooleka Sarhadi. *Where are you From? Middle Class Migrants in the Modern World*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003.

Salinger, Sharon V. *"To Serve Well and Faithfully": Labor and Indentured Servants in Pennsylvania, 1682-1800*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Seip, Anne-Lise. "Nation-building within the Union: Politics, Class and Culture in the Norwegian Nation-State in the Nineteenth Century." *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 20 no 1 (1995): 35-50.

Semmingsen, Ingrid. *Norway to America: A History of the Migration*. Translated by E. Haugen. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978.

Sherman, William C. *Prairie Mosaic: An Ethnic Atlas of Rural North Dakota*. Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1983.

Smith, Robert C. "How Durable and New is Transnational Life? Historical Retrieval through Local Comparison." *Diaspora*, 9, no 2 (2000): 203-233.

—. *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

—. "Diasporic Memberships in Historical Perspectives: Comparative Insights from the Mexican, Italian and Polish Cases." *International Migration Review*, 37, no 3 (2003): 724-759.

Thai, Hung Cam. *For Better or For Worse: Vietnamese International Marriages in the New Global Economy*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2008.

Tvedt, Johanna. "Interview by Mark Olson." Transcript, 6 pps. Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1971.

U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1920*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1921.

Vertovec, Steven. "Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22, no. 2 (1999): 447-462.

Waldinger, Roger. "Immigrant 'Transnationalism' and the Presence of the Past." Pp. 267-285 in *From Arrival to Incorporation: Migrants to the U.S. in a Global Era*, edited by E. Barkan, H. Diner, and A. M. Kraut. New York: New York University Press, 2008.

Waldinger, Roger and David Fitzgerald. "Transnationalism in Question." *American Journal of Sociology*, 109, no 5 (2004): 1177-1195.

Waters, Mary C. *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Young, Carrie. *Nothing to Do but Stay*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991.

Zempel, Solveig. *In Their Own Words: Letters from Norwegian Immigrants*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.