

The Rock Run Settlement. Other Immigrants of 1839. The Immigration of 1840.

Source: History of Norwegian Immigration to The United States From the Earliest Beginning down to the Year 1848 By GEORGE T. FLOM, Ph. D. (Columbia)

It has been stated that a settlement was also established in Illinois about twenty miles southwest of Rock Prairie, the same year as the latter was settled, i. e., in 1839. This came to be known as the Rock Run Settlement, from the name of the town. It lies partly in Stephenson, partly in Winnebago County. The locality is prairie, relieved here and there by bits of timber land. The foundation of this settlement is also to be accredited to an immigrant from Numedal, who came on the *Amelia*, in 1839. His name was Clemet Torstenson Stabæk, and he came from Rollaug Parish. With him three others located there in the fall of 1839, namely, Syvert Tollefson and Ole Anderson, from Numedal, and a Mr. Knudson, from Drammen. Stabæk was a man of considerable means. He selected land in Winnebago County, near the present village of Davis. His son, Torsten K. O. Stabæk (born in Norway^[97]) married Torgen Patterson, and they lived on the farm until 1884, when they moved to Davis.^[98] Kristopher Rostad and wife, Kristi, seem also to have moved to Rock Run before the close of 1839. In the following summer came Gunnul Stordok, to whom we have referred under the settling of Newark in Rock County. Stordok lived in Rock Run until 1870; he then moved back to Newark, where the rest of his relatives who had come to America had settled.^[99] Gunnul Stordok was born in Rollaug, Numedal, in the year 1800; he married Mary Larson (of Rollaug) before emigrating.

Among the earliest arrivals in the settlement subsequently was Halvor Aasen, born in Numedal in 1823, and who came to America in 1841. For two years after coming to this country he worked in the lead mines at Mineral Point, Wisconsin, and at Galena, Illinois. In 1843 he married Christie Olson, and bought a farm in Laona Township, Winnebago County, whither he and his wife moved in 1844. Here they lived until their death. She died in 1902, and he in March, 1905.^[100]

The Rock Run Settlement was prosperous but did not grow to such proportions as its sister settlements to the north. In later years many of its earlier pioneers moved back to Rock County, as Stordok did, and as Lars Rostad and family also did in the sixties. Among those who located at Rock Run in the forties were Hovel Paulson (born 1817) from North Land Parish, Norway, who located near Davis in 1846;^[101] Christian Lunde, also from Land, Norway, came to Rock Run in 1848 and later moved to Goodhue County, Minnesota; Narve Stabæk, Torsten Knudson and Nels Nelson, all three from Numedal; Gunder O. Halvorson, from Kragerö; Svale Nilson, from Bukn Parish, Stavanger; Gunder Halvorson, from Telemarken, and Lars O. Anderson. There appears a very brief account of the Rock Run Settlement by Lars O. Anderson in *Nordlyset*, under date of June second, 1848. According to this there were at that time twenty families, twelve unmarried men over twenty years of age, six unmarried women of over twenty years,

while there were thirty-two persons below the age of twenty. The whole settlement, he says, numbers ninety persons and comprises 4,062 acres of land.

We have followed somewhat fully the immigration movement in Numedal and Telemarken in 1839, and we have also noted the fact that that year records its contingent of emigrants also from Stavanger Province. It remains here to note briefly the growth of the movement in Voss and its spread elsewhere. Nils Lydvo came from Voss in 1839, and went directly to his brothers, Knud and Ole Lydvo, in Shelby County, Missouri. At the same time came Anders Finno, Lars Davidson Rekve, Nils Severson Gilderhus, and Anfin Leidal; their destination was La Salle County.[102] The party further contained Ole K. Gilderhus, Lars Ygre, Anders Flage, Lars Dugstad, Knud Gjöstein, Anders Nilson Brække and wife, Knud Brække and wife, Magne B. Bystölen, Anna Gilderhus, and Anna Bakketun.

This party seems to have arrived in New York early in July, 1839, and to have intended to go to Illinois. We shall meet with most of them later as pioneers in Wisconsin settlements, but for a time many of them remained in Chicago, so that in the fall of 1839 and the following winter there was a considerable colony of Norwegian immigrants located in Chicago. Nils A. Lie, of Deerfield, Wisconsin, writing of this fact, says there were more Vossings in Chicago about 1840 than all other Norwegians combined.[103] Among those who remained temporarily in Chicago were Ole K. Gilderhus, Lars Ygre and Lars Rekve. The last of these worked for a year on a steamer plying between Chicago and St. Joseph, Michigan.[104] I shall give a brief sketch of him below, under Koshkonong. Anders Finno went to Koshkonong, Dane County, in 1840, but later settled in Blue Mounds, in the same county. In 1850 he went to California with a group of gold seekers and has not since been heard from by his compatriots.

Anders Nilson Brække[105] was born at Brække, Voss, Norway, February twelfth, 1818; he had married Inger Nelson in Norway. Brække located permanently in Chicago, working at first for Mathew Laflin and John Wright. He laid the foundation of his future fortune in 1845, when he purchased some property on Superior Street, on part of which he built the residence, where he lived until his death in 1887. He held many offices of public trust in the discharge of which he was able and unimpeachable in his honesty. Brække's first wife died early leaving three children.[106] In 1849 he married Mrs. Julia K. Williams; three children by this marriage are living.[107]

In the party of emigrants from Voss in 1839 were also Arne Anderson Vinje (born 1820) and wife Martha (Gulliksdatter Kindem). From Vinje we learn that the ship, on which the twenty emigrants from Voss came that year, left Norway April sixteenth and that they arrived at Chicago in September. Vinje located first in Chicago; soon after arriving he built a log house, in which he and his wife lived during the first winter. Anders Brække, it is said, assisted him in the erection of the log house. During the winter Vinje worked on a road that was being laid out on the west side; for this work he received sixteen dollars a month. The next July however Vinje

together with Per Davidson Skjerveim (who had just arrived from Voss, Norway) each with his team of oxen left for Hamilton Diggings in La Fayette. Here each took a claim of government land; of this we shall speak more at length in the chapter on Wiotia.

During the year 1840 emigration from Norway was rather limited. There had been a considerable exodus in 1839 from Numedal and Telemarken. The lull in 1840 may be explained by the fact that intending emigrants in those regions were waiting for favorable news from their relatives and friends who had gone the preceding year. The settlers at Muskego, on Jefferson and Rock Prairies and at Rock Run had barely gotten located when the winter set in. Communication was of course very slow, and spring and early summer was the sailing season of Norwegian emigrants in those days. The year 1840, however, brought its quota of arrivals from Voss,[108] namely Kund J. Hylle, Ole S. Gilderhus, Knut Rokne, Mads Sanve, Baard Nyre, Brynjolf Ronve, Torstein Saue, wife, and son Gulleik,[109] Klaus Grimestad and wife, Arne Urland and wife, and Lars T. Røthe; there were twenty in all in the party. All of these it is said settled in Chicago.[110] They all came in Captain Ankerson's ship *Emelia*, the same ship which carried Nattestad's party in 1839. They were five months on this journey, arriving in Chicago in September. We shall later meet with some of these elsewhere.

A few other names from different parts of Norway are recorded among the immigrants of 1839. We have observed above that Johan Nordboe of Ringebo in Gudbrandsdalen had come to America in 1832. Though he wrote letters home it does not seem that he succeeded in promoting emigration from that section of Norway, except individually, and then not until 1839. In that year his friend Lars Johanneson Holo of Ringsaker, Hedemarken, together with three grown up sons came to America.[111] Holo did, however, not go to Dallas County, Texas, where Nordboe had settled the year before, but he first located in Rochester, New York. A man by the name of Lauman from Faaberg in Gudbrandsdalen also came with him and went to Rochester. He, however, went west a few years later, settling in Lee County, Illinois. Holo remained in Rochester two years, he and his sons being employed there on the canal. In 1841 they went to Muskego, where we shall find them in our next chapter.

Among the immigrants of 1839 we find one man from Sogn, the first to emigrate from that region to America. His name is Per I. Unde,[112] and he came from Vik Parish in Outer Sogn. He lived in Chicago it seems, the two first years he was in America. In 1841 his brother Ole Unde arrived and the two went to La Fayette County; we shall speak of both of these men later. Among the immigrants of 1839 who did not go to Muskego I may here mention Knud Hellikson Roe and wife Anna and four children who came from Tin, Telemarken. They went to La Salle County, Illinois, where they lived till 1841; thence they removed to Racine County and in 1843 went to Dane County, Wisconsin (see below).

Ole H. Hanson and wife also from Tin, Telemarken, came in 1839. They settled at Indian Creek, near where now stands the village of Leland, La Salle County, Illinois. The first winter they lived

in a dugout on the same spot on the homestead where the residence now stands. Mrs. Hanson died in 1842, Mr. Hanson died three years later. The children were Ole, known as Ole H. Hanson, Alex, Betsey, Helen, and Levina. Ole Hanson assumed charge of the homestead and lived there and near Leland till his death in December, 1904. In 1855 he married Isabella Osmundson, who died in 1873. They had six children, one of whom is C. F. Hanson,[113] State's Attorney, of Morris, Illinois.