



A Newsletter of the Norman County Genealogy Society

Gateway to America

Just a few weeks ago, my husband and I were in New York City and we took the opportunity to visit the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. What a wonderful experience it was to see the same sights that our ancestors saw as they entered America.

Today's visitors to Ellis Island, although unencumbered by bundled possessions and the harrowing memory of

a trans-Atlantic journey, retrace the steps of twelve million immigrants who approached America's "front doors to freedom" in the early twentieth century. Now, in place of the business-like machinery of immigration inspection, the restored Main Hall now houses the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, dedicated to commemorating the immigrants' stories of trepidation and triumph, courage and rejection, and the lasting image of

the American dream.

During its peak years – 1892 to 1924 – Ellis Island received thousands of immigrants a day. Each was scrutinized for disease or disability as the long line of hopeful new arrivals made their way up the steep stairs to the great, echoing Registry Room. Over 100 million American can trace their ancestry in the United States to a man, woman or child whose name passed from a steamship
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The American Family Immigration History Center

This innovative family history facility is located in the Ellis Island Immigration Museum and available online at www.ellisland.org.

The Center, developed and administered by The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, provides easy access to the ships' passenger manifest records of the 22 million people who entered America through the Port of New York and

Ellis Island between 1892-1924. The database is searchable by immigrant name, but it is helpful if you also know the approximate age at arrival and date of arrival, as well as the port of departure.

A search can lead you to a passenger record that provides 11 fields of information extracted from the original manifest including: immigrant's given name and surname, ethnicity, last residence

(town & country), date of arrival, age at arrival, gender, marital status, ship of travel, port of departure and line number on the manifest. Visitors can also obtain a reproduction of the original ship's manifest as well as a picture of the ship of passage.

For further information go to the website or call (212) 883-1986.

First Church in Norman County

“The first meeting house was built mostly of logs with donated labor.”

The Marsh River Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Congregation was the first congregation to be organized in Norman County. It was organized on August 12, 1872 by Reverend B. L. Hagboe at the home of Engel Lausnes. A constitution was written, adopted and signed by 26 charter members. In 1875 land was purchased from the railroad for the church building and cemetery. The first meeting house

was built mostly of logs with donated labor. The first parsonage was built in 1881, later it was moved to what is known as the Tucker farm in Good Hope Township. In 1887 it was decided to build a larger church which was built in 75 days. In 1896, an organ was purchased. On February 7, 1952, fire broke out in the church and due to inadequate water supply, the church burned to the ground – a

total loss. The members continued to meet as a congregation with Shelly. After several meetings, it was decided not to rebuild but instead to merge with Shelly. On January 6, 1953, the merger was consummated and the two congregations became one, to be named the Shelly-Marsh River Congregation.

Aabye/Ericksen Store in Perley

Excerpts from: **A History of the People of Norman County, Minnesota** by *The Norman County Heritage Commission and the Norman County Historical Society*, 1976, Taylor Publishing

Ericksen Store began as Aabye Store in 1880 near the Red River about four miles south of Perley by A. T. Aabye, grandfather of A. B. Ericksen. At that time there was a river barge landing and a 40,000 bushel grain elevator four miles south of Perley. The elevator was built right on the river bank and the grain was spouted down into the barges. Mr. Aabye ran the store there until 1884.

It was about this time that Perley got its name. A man named S. C. Comstock, who bought land for the railroad, picked the present village site and name it after a close friend of his, George Perley, an early day Moorhead attorney.

1884 was a big year in the Perley area. The railroad

was coming. It was in this year that a spur line was extended from Moorhead through the present location of Georgetown through Perley, Hendrum and on as far as Halstad.

There was little if anything at the village site until about the time railroad came and then things began to happen fast. It was just a short time after the railroad come as far as Perley that A. T. Aabye decided to move the store to Perley. Two large oak trees were cut down, the bark trimmed off and these were used as skids. The big logs were put under the store building and 36 horses were hooked on to pull the store up to Perley. Everything was left right in the store and Mrs. Aabye even prepared a meal while the store was being moved.

The store was moved to Perley in just a few hours as they only stopped once when a horse stepped over the tug. The Aabye Store was one of the very first buildings in Perley.

Just a short time after the store was moved up to Perley, Mrs. A. T. (Inger) Aabye was widowed and she took charge of the store.

It seems Inger Aabye was a headstrong woman, set in her ways, and above all else, a person who believed in doing something about the things she didn't like or approve of. Some of the men who worked for her were drinkers which she didn't approve

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Aabye/Ericksen Store in Perley (continued from page 2)

Something just had to be done about the man who was bootlegging hard liquor to the men of the town and to her hired men. Getting some of the women and a few men together one night, the group used her horses and hooked onto the man's one room cabin, pulled it to the edge of town and set fire to it. So much for those small chores that have to be taken care of in a community.

Several years later G. E. Erickson married Inger Aabye's daughter and he began running the store.

A few years later G. E. Ericksen purchased half interest in the store, and in 1934, with the death of Inger Aabye, purchased the other half. A. B. Ericksen (son of G.E. Ericksen) bought half interest in the store in 1939 and later took over the store when his father retired.

The Ericksens sold the firm in 1964, thus ending a business of 84 years in the Aabye-Ericksen family, passing through three generations.

"...the group used her horses and hooked onto the man's one room cabin, pulled it to the edge of town and set fire to it."

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Manifest sheet to an inspector's record book in the great Registry Room at Ellis Island.

After inspection immigrants descended from the Registry Room down the "Stairs of Separation," so called because they marked the parting of the way for many family and friends with different destinations. Immigrants were directed toward the railroad ticket office and trains to points west, or to the island's hospital and detention

rooms.

During peak immigration years, detentions at Ellis Island ran as high as twenty percent – thousands of immigrants a day. A detainee's stay could last days or even weeks.

With restriction on immigration in the 1920's Ellis Island's population dwindled, and the station finally closed its door in 1954. It's grand brick and limestone buildings gradually deteriorated in the fierce weather of New

York Harbor. Concern about this vital part of America's immigrant history led to the inclusion of Ellis Island as part of Statue of Liberty National Monument in 1965. Private citizens mounted a campaign to preserve the Island, and one of the most ambitious restoration projects in American history returned Ellis Island's Main Building to its former grandeur in September, 1990.

If you'd like information about your ancestor go to: www.ellisland.org

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Attach Address Label Here

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.rootsweb.com/~mnnorman

About Our Organization...

The Norman County Genealogy Society was formed on February 27, 1997 in Ada, MN for the purpose of assisting persons interested in research family histories and sharing information.

Charter members of the society were Roland Carpenter, Iris Duklet, Colleen Goltz, Ardis Horn, Sharon Larson, Roger Niebeling, Gladys Prussia, Ronald Rasmusson, Christine Roesch, Ronald Roesch, DeFloren Rude, Edna Rude and Kathleen Skaurud.

A few resources available include:

- Obituaries taken from area newspapers.
- Cemetery records
- Marriage records
- Death records from 1871 to 1981
- Census records
- Civil War Veterans
- 1883 Pensioners on the Roll
- Churches and Towns

Much of this information is posted on our website.

The Society meets on the third Saturday of the month at 10:30 am in the Dekko Center or Norman County Museum, Ada, MN.

Annual Dues are \$10.00 for a family membership (local) and \$5.00 for an associate membership (out of area.) Dues should be sent to the Treasurer in January:

Ardis Horn
101 1st Street East
Ada, MN 56510