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NORWEGIAN-AMERICANS AND THE POLITICS
OF DISSENT, 1880-1924

by

Lowell J. Soike

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in History
in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

December, 1979

Thesis supervisor: Professor Robert R. Dykstra

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PH.D. THESIS

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Lowell J. Soike

has been approved by the Examining Committee
for the thesis requirement for the Doctor of
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1979 graduation.

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INTRODUCTION

Considerable attention has in recent years been devoted to the study of historical voting behavior.¹ Employing quantitative techniques of varied complexity, studies have in one way or another tried to identify the determinants of popular voting during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The most striking of their conclusions is that conflicts relating to Americans' ethnicity, national origins and religion, most shaped partisan attachments and cleavages. With this as the centerpiece of their analyses, the "new political historians" have relegated class and economic conflict to a secondary influence except in times of great economic stress (the early 1890's and the 1930's).

Ethnocultural analyses have extended beyond simply identifying the kind and strength of associations between ethnic groups and their votes. They have tried to account for what motivated voters to act as they did.² Some find explanations in the hostilities of groups toward one another and the political parties with which they were aligned. Others find voting related to groups seeking to impose their own cultural practices (Sabbath observance,

drinking, and education) on others who reacted out of cultural defense. But more frequently, ethnocultural historians have emphasized conflicting religious orientations between those ethnic groups holding evangelical or pietist values and those of liturgical, ritualist and non-evangelical bent. According to this view, evangelical pietists, convinced that salvation lay in one's personal conduct and good works, felt that government ought actively to legislate standards of private and public morality in order to create a social environment conducive to salvation. They traditionally aligned themselves with the Republican party. Liturgical groups, seeking refuge in the laissez-faire social attitudes of the Democratic party, concerned themselves less with secular conduct than with faith (doctrine and dogma) as the key to salvation, strongly opposing governmental interference in matters of personal conduct.

A historian's conclusions, of course, depend to a great extent on the research strategy adopted. Decisions about what data to observe, over what span of time, and for what geographic location, may illuminate some patterns while obscuring others. Most ethnocultural historians have tended to deal with an entire range of nationality and religious groups in an area, comparing the central voting tendencies of one group to those of the others. The

present study departs from this approach by focusing on the extent to which one can generalize about one such group--the Norwegian-Americans of the Upper Middlewest (specifically in the states of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota)--in its varied political manifestations at different political levels. Given this strategy, I have found that Norwegian-American voting behavior displayed distinctive regional, state and local qualities that lead me to question whether fixed ethnoreligious influences predominated for most times and places.

To establish the effect of various conditions upon voting patterns, my general approach has been to proceed from the large scale to the small. I begin with an overview of nineteenth century Norway and the immigrants' entry into American political life. I then consider their voting behavior at (1) regional, (2) state and (3) county levels of political interaction. The study is based on votes cast in elections for governor and President from 1890 predominantly Norwegian townships and small towns of three states, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa. These I have compared with a variety of social and economic characteristics of these settlements, supplemented by information gleaned from newspapers and other narrative sources.

The result is a story of a people who fashioned allegiances in response to specific political situations

faced--the mix of individuals, groups, issues, and economic and social forces pressing at different political levels. Norwegian-American political behavior--varied or unified--depended ultimately on this concert of time, place, opportunity and the juncture of events.

NOTES

¹The two major such studies on Midwestern politics are Richard Jensen, The Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict, 1888-1896 (Chicago, 1971); and Paul Kleppner, The Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics, 1850-1900 (New York, 1970). For discussion of other major voting analyses and the thrust of their interpretations, see: Allan G. Bogue, Jerome W. Clubb and William H. Flanigan, "The New Political History," American Behavioral Scientist, XXI (1977), 201-220; Richard L. McCormick, "Ethno-Cultural Interpretations of Nineteenth-Century American Voting Behavior," Political Science Quarterly, IXC (1974), 351-377; James E. Wright, "The Ethnocultural Model of Voting," American Behavioral Scientist, XVI (1973), 653-674; Samuel T. McSeveney, "Ethnic Groups, Ethnic Conflicts, and Recent Quantitative Research in American Political History," International Migration Review, VII (1973), 14-33; Robert P. Swierenga, "Ethnocultural Political Analysis: a New Approach to American Ethnic Studies," Journal of American Studies, V (1971), 59-79; Walter Dean Burnham, "Quantitative History: Beyond the Correlation Coefficient, A Review Essay," Historical Methods Newsletter, IV (1971), 62-66; Paul Kleppner, "Beyond the 'New Political History': A Review Essay," Historical Methods Newsletter, VI (1972), 17-26; Allan G. Bogue, "United States: The 'New' Political History," Journal of Contemporary History, III (1968), 5-27.

²McCormick, "Ethno-Cultural Interpretations," 352, 358-371.

CHAPTER I
FROM NORWAY TO AMERICA

"The feeling of unity is so very weak with us," lamented the Norwegian-American writer of a 1906 political circular who urged that one of their nationality be elected governor of Wisconsin.¹ Although, in the words of H. H. Boyeson, a Norwegian immigrant had "no choice but to be clannish, unless he chooses to associate with those who look down upon him," countless attempts by the press and ambitious Norwegian-American politicians to arouse a more clannish regard for political recognition quite typically yielded stories of mixed success.²

The reason? Norwegian immigrants seem to have lacked a strong sense of national identity. Feelings of nationalism came with the feelings of togetherness they knew upon being thrown together with unfamiliar immigrants. But until then, Norwegian immigrants considered themselves as natives of Trondhjem, Hardanger, Valdres or whatever province and parish district was their home. The character of Norway and its history rent immigrant loyalties in ways that made their attachments to home equate poorly with strong pan-Norwegian feelings. As one

historian of Norwegian immigration puts it, had war occurred in 1905, when Norway separated herself from union with Sweden, "all the recruits from America could probably have been shipped across the Atlantic in one voyage of a small steamship."³

Provincial loyalties bedeviled Norwegian unity. Before the coming of modern transportation and communications in the middle of the nineteenth century, centuries of geographic isolation had produced sparse rural populations clustered into closely knit, self supporting, small neighborhoods or bygder. With outside contact and trade interrupted by mountainous terrain, forest cover, lakes, rivers and difficult roads, local people had developed, in varying degrees of isolation, distinguishable differences in dialect, religious inclinations and social class. Until large-scale emigration to America began in the 1860's, the typical rural dweller drew his first breath and lived out his days in the familiar patterns of parish life that knew few attachments to distant towns, cities and the national metropolis.⁴ "The Norwegian farmer's mind is accustomed to move in a narrow circle," observed an immigrant countryman. And because the rural Norwegian's interests "rarely stray beyond his farm, his parish or his district," he added, "it is very difficult for him to drop his little local scheme, for the benefit of the larger commonwealth."⁵

Consequently, "patriotism with them in the Old World," writes one historian, became "quite as much a sentiment or love for the parish or the homestead" as it did "a fierce and militant passion for the power and leadership of the nation."⁶

Of course life in Norway did in many ways make a lasting impression on the immigrant. Countless personal, family, social and other experiences and attachments wove themselves into his outlook and memories--adjusting his horizons, shaping his inclinations. But as Norwegians what did they have in common, the poor fisherman in the northern ports and the thriving farmer of Vestfold, or the timber worker of Trondhjem and the smallholder farmer of Sogn, or the crofter from Hedmark and the seaman from Stavanger, or the parish pastor of Romsdal and the merchant of Christiania? Being a people that in Norway had been territorially dispersed, economically mixed and for the most part politically inexperienced, immigrants seemingly shared little in common that could be transplanted to the American political scene.

I

Two central facts governed life in nineteenth-century Norway: its severe, inhospitable geography and its legacy of political dominance by others. Situated on the northern

rim of Europe, Norway's long ragged coastline stretches toward the Arctic Circle. In sharp contrast to Denmark, where three-fourths of the land is tillable, three-fourths of Norway is incapable of cultivation, comprising bare rock, glaciers, snow cover, bogs and land suitable only for grazing. The country's rugged central mountain system divides eastern and western Norway in twain, while deep trough-like fjords slice for miles into the interior from the seacoast. Only in the south and southeast are more gentle inclines to be found. In the nineteenth century, with most of what remained in Norway occupied by forest, the country continued to be the least populated of European kingdoms. Farms were small, with nine out of ten separately registered holdings in 1926 having less than twenty-five acres of cultivated land. And, as might be expected, habitable areas of Norway remained few and scattered. Small farmsteads and settlements dotted the interior lakeshores and river inlets. Others lay along tillable strips at the valley bottoms and fishing communities hugged the islands and narrow rocky coasts.⁷

As Norway's uneven topography dispersed people into isolated districts and regions, so her climate brought further variety. Although Norway is a far northern country of long summer days and long winter nights, the warm Gulf Stream currents moderate the long winters and leaves its

many coastal inlets and fjords navigable all year round. In the interior, however, long and severe winters compelled nineteenth-century farmers to stall-feed their livestock from September or October to June and to take full advantage of the short summer to grow their supply of oats, rye, barley, forage crops (hay, turnips) and potatoes. Precipitation also varies: rain and fog frequents the coast but decreases inland. Viewed in relation to natural regions of the country, severe winters, hot summers and light rainfall characterize inland areas of southern and eastern Norway while mild winters, cool summers and unsettled weather conditions bring abundant rainfall along the whole length of the western coast.⁸

Climate and the dictates of geography consequently distributed occupations unequally throughout the country in the nineteenth century. The greatest visible difference existed between the east, with its large numbers of people occupied in summer farming and winter forestry pursuits, and the west and north where many seasonally searched for the cod and the capricious herring along the broad belt of relatively shallow fishing banks surrounding the mainland. The central precipitous mountain areas served only as pasture during the bright summer months when the sun pushed forth vegetation on which to graze goats, horses, sheep and cattle for animal products. As for the towns,

which contained one-tenth of the people in 1801 and roughly one-fourth of the population at the close of the century, fishery related livelihoods predominated in towns to the north, manufacturing industries were most advanced in the counties near Oslo, and shipping assumed strength in towns all along the southern coast.⁹

Differences also prevailed within agriculture, which as late as 1891 still engaged one-half of Norway's people. Unequally productive land fostered different types of farming. Large farms covered the broad expansive valleys of southeastern Norway where arable tracts made possible larger fields and more efficient modern farm practices. There, the greatest concentration of good farmland lay in Ostfold and Vestfold counties bordering Oslofjord, and in the parishes to the north around Lake Mjosa where the fertile, relatively flat lands consistently produced enough grain for some to be sold elsewhere. On the steep sloped uplands of central Norway, however, the thin stone filled land could not be tilled and so people concentrated on making use of available meadowlands and pastures to raise animals for trade and prepare such products as meat, hide and butter. Many of the smaller farmers also worked in the winter time cutting and driving timber in the pine forests that filled areas south and east of the central mountains and extended upward from the

cultivated fields and bottom pastures until replaced by forests of birch. But although timber covered four out of ten acres in eastern parts of Norway, it claimed hardly one in ten acres in the west and north country. Consequently farmers there divided their time between the seasonal uncertainties of fishing and eking out spare livings from small patches of soil between rocks. The farther one traveled toward the economically disadvantaged north, the more frequently one found a sparsely settled, poor, debt ridden people relying solely on the harvest of the sea for life.¹⁰

The country's political history before 1815 had been largely one of foreign domination. Norway had first achieved political unification during the Viking era and, though civil wars and border wars frequented the country, medieval Norway enjoyed general prosperity. But when the Black Death of the fourteenth century spread across northern Europe, Norway's fortunes declined. With her brief centuries of military power, economic growth and cultural richness in eclipse, the country entered a time of drift as its line of rulers died out and leading families went under. By intermarriage, Norway fell gradually under the dominance of Denmark--a relationship that in time reduced her to semi-colonial status. Not until 1814--four hundred years later--did the Napoleonic

wars give Norway's Danish-Norwegian leadership a chance to assert claims to independence from Denmark. But despite their best efforts to this end, the victorious postwar powers soon compelled Norway to accept a union with Sweden. This, however, Norway's upper classes accomplished on the basis of two equal peoples federally united under a single monarch with their own right of self government under their own Constitution. But the union, conceived when times quickened with national feeling, would last but ninety years. Of symbolic importance, the King resided in Stockholm, and increasingly Norwegians became preoccupied with any infringements on their national independence and self-identity by the more populous and powerful Swedes. Every weak attempt by the sister kingdom to bind the two countries closer together only strengthened Norwegian conviction that they occupied an inferior position. Lingering traces of earlier foreign supremacy hindered national pride and fostered self-conscious efforts to eradicate these traces long after their influence had waned.¹¹

The facts of geography and outside political dominance thus spun contrasts wherever one turned, between people and landscapes, between counties, diet and dialects, between peasants and officials, between peasants and laborers, between urban and rural, between east and west,

south and north, and between coast and inland. Surface appearances of Norwegian immigrants notwithstanding, Norwegians of a century ago made up a varied people. To treat them as a homogeneous group fosters misinterpretation by encouraging a belief that the characteristics of some people were widely shared by most.

Consider for a moment the idea that attachment to democracy strongly marked the Norwegian character. Historians of Norwegian immigration, perhaps anxious to show Norwegian-American respectability in the face of anti-foreignism, have been quick to assert that Norway's immigrants closely resembled Americans in that they, too, had acquired the political knowledge and experience of living in a democratic country. "They hail from one of the two most democratic countries of Europe," claims a typical enthusiast, "and have come, as they are coming, to the United States thoroughly schooled in popular government."¹² As evidence of strong democratic impulses, they fondly point out that the people had never known bondage and that, after Norway established her constitutional government in 1814, the people lived under an extremely democratic form of government by the standards of the time. Because Norway had always been too poor and unpopulated to support a nobility with extensive political or economic privileges, her land titles had never run entirely in the

name of the King. Instead, from earliest times, peasants had without royal charter held the right under ancient udal laws, to own and inherit land. Danish and Swedish rulers alike chose not to interfere with Norway's land-holding system.¹³ As for Norway's liberal constitution of 1814, with over one in ten of its people enfranchised, Norway led other countries of western Europe in its level of early democratization.¹⁴

But to infer from these facts that most Norwegians either participated in, or committed themselves to, democratic politics in nineteenth century Norway is surely debatable. At a time when the bulk of Norwegian immigrants were crowding into rural settlements of the Upper Midwest, back in Norway the large landless rural proletariat (i.e., cotters and farm laborers) still remained unrepresented in the country's political system. And even among those peasants over age twenty-five who met the qualification for property ownership, widespread political apathy prevailed. The size of the Norwegian electorate had declined from 1815 to the 1870's to the point where only one-third of the men age twenty-five and older qualified to vote and only one-fifth had registered to vote.¹⁵ Moreover, only one-tenth of those over the standard voting age actually voted. Not until the fiercely partisan period of 1879 to 1884, when parliament asserted its supremacy over the King and his

ministry, did increased numbers of voters begin to register and cast their ballots in elections. Rural participation never matched urban, however. Even when the franchise criteria expanded beyond property ownership to include men over twenty-five who met minimum income standards, low levels of rural involvement persisted. Indeed, after universal male suffrage came with the 1900 elections, rural voters lagged far behind in entering the electorate.¹⁶ Surely if political participation be the measure of democratic feelings and schooling in democracy, few Norwegians evidently met the test.

Political apathy could be expected in a place such as Norway where people faced pronounced class distinctions. True enough, decreasing rates of infant and child mortality had dramatically increased the size of families and these surges in growth brought surges of economic advance that opened doors of employment opportunity. But although activity expanded in the countryside, increasing the number of craftsmen and occupying people in clearing new land for cultivation, this agricultural "frontier" evidently possessed no potential for a Turnerian democratization.¹⁷ Being for ages "peopled up to its resources," Norway's meagerly expanding agricultural, business and governmental opportunities still continued to hold most persons within their classes. With upward aspirations discouraged, most

clung to their positions on the social ladder, protecting existing arrangements and distinctions, shrinking from protesting their equality to their betters. Recognizing these conservative social impulses, a traveler of the 1830's observed that Norway's "different classes are as distinctly separated, and with as little blending together, as in the feudally constituted countries, in which the separation is effected by legal privileges and established ranks."¹⁸

Although the deepest social separation lay between the native common people and the Danish oriented official class of the cities, sharp distinctions extended to outlying society.¹⁹ In the towns, educated crown officials such as the pastor, the district judge and sheriff and their families stood well apart from the ordinary trader, craftsman and mill operator--and instead linked themselves by manners and contacts to their counterparts in the cities. In the countryside, a similar social gulf separated the bonder (farmers who owned land) from the husmaend, or crofters who lived in huts on patches of land granted to them by farm owners in exchange for their tenant labor. Additionally, tens of thousands of laborers and servants, equally underprivileged, filled shabby living quarters in both town and country. No servant, laborer or crofter had much hope of ever rising

to become a bonde. The extent of social distance between the elements, however, varied considerably from region to region. Social stratification became steepest in eastern Norway where the wealthier landholding bonder employed many agricultural laborers and servants on their larger acreages. Likewise, these landholding farmers had little to do with the typical smallholder bonder of western Norway. There, where the small farmer himself stood but a step above poverty, social divisions narrowed between crofter and farmer. Also, the far lower proportion of crofters to farmers in western than eastern parts of the country reduced visible social contrasts between people.²⁰

Political apathy also owed something to the indirect selection of representatives to the Storting (parliament), which tended to deaden public political interest. Under this system, reminiscent of the way that political parties in the United States choose candidates by caucus, the qualified voters of each parish only selected election-men who in turn attended county gatherings to choose the actual representatives to the Storting. This indirect system persisted until 1905, when it was replaced by one in which each constituency directly elected its own representative.²¹

But despite the faint stirrings of national spirit among those who emigrated and despite the inapplicability of Norway's political past to most circumstances in

America, immigrants still shared a few important attitudes that could be politically roused by American issues. Three rooted themselves in Norway's agrarian society: a sense of peasant class consciousness, a dislike of government officialdom and a suspicion of towns and cities. This was a particularly important potential, since over 70 percent of the immigrants, in the period 1865-1915, hailed from rural districts of Norway.²² Two other common factors drew from the Norwegians' religious upbringing: their near homogeneous Lutheranism, impregnated with latent anti-Catholicism, and a tension between high church and low church orientations.

These political and religious impulses mingled together into a rejection in many rural provinces of all important central authority. Lay religious movements (emanating from the west and southwest) inveighed against the "high church" official clergy and the degraded secularism of urban centers, while resentment smoldered among farmers and nationalist minded peasants against the King's "Europeanized" and "urbanite" civil officials, both of whom they identified with the capital and other large administrative centers. Many no doubt felt as did Torkjell Tualand--a crofter in Arne Garborg's novel Peace (1892)--that "the sheriff doesn't eat his bread in the sweat of his brow." People would be less impoverished, he

cried, if they'd "throw out all those strutting officials and these pot-bellied clerics and the military jingoists."²³ Their rejections of central authority assumed a pronounced territorial-cultural struggle between urban and rural forces and a regional struggle, reflecting age old differences, between East and West Norway. One broad issue between 1814 and 1884 animated these conflicts: conflicts between the ruling official estate and other segments of society over the proper place and power of the Swedish monarchy in Norway's affairs.²⁴

After Norway's separation from Denmark, the existing body of civil servants and professional upper classes for several decades continued to control government. Their decline came when the inarticulate farmers and others awakened to their strength. This did not occur overnight. Centuries of deference to those whose language and culture the farmers had accepted as superior to their own allowed the King's officials to perpetuate their influence over the electoral colleges. By 1830, however, some change was visible. Although still unsure of themselves and continually split by regional and local divisions, farmers cautiously began to press for greater political recognition and influence as they became more numerous in parliament. And from 1860 onward, many farmers stood ready to transcend their traditional aims (that is, minimizing state

expenditures and curtailing advantages enjoyed by civil servants) and actively pursue constitutional reforms. Ultimately in the 1870's they and the rising commercial and middle classes of the cities joined together in the constitutional struggle and emerged victorious in 1884, when the King's executive branch reluctantly accepted a parliamentary system of government.²⁵

The farmers' struggle in part expressed a silent revolution against "Europeanized" officialdom and cosmopolitan influences. Norwegians remained sensitive to the barrier between themselves and the "people of condition." Laws did not identify their betters or give them preferential rank. Rather, the mutually recognizable marks of refined civility, education, dress and, above all, the stiff formality of Dano-Norwegian language drew the curtain of social distance between the upper classes and the less privileged. Moneyed people sometimes entered this class--persons who had succeeded in sawmilling, small industry, shipping and wholesaling businesses, or who owned sizable agricultural or forest holdings. More typically, however, "people of condition" included prestigious but less affluent professionals--Crown officials, high administrators in municipal and state government and white collar entrepreneurs such as lawyers, physicians and civil engineers. Of these, the Crown officials in the Norwegian

bureaucracy formed the core, and they comprised clergy, civil servants, higher court judges and military officers whose family members, often of Danish extraction, had been emissaries and agents under Danish rule. Committed to their lives in Norway, spokesmen of this group had swiftly asserted national autonomy back in 1814 when Denmark was under compulsion to hand Norway over to Sweden. But popular support for them then weakened over the years. Their sophisticated, urbane manners and strongly Danish speech and their regard for themselves as a distinct, superior segment of the people left them with few ties to the native Norwegian peasantry once nationalism and equalitarian desires for greater recognition took hold.²⁶

Divisive territorial and cultural strains persisted beyond the advent of parliamentary government, however, superceding economic conflicts in importance until after 1918. Proponents of rural culture found special strength in the strife between high and low church elements that animated Norwegian life ever since Hans Nielson Hauge (1771-1824) ignited the longings of many peasant parishioners for a more inward religion than that provided by the cool rationalism of the state church clergy. Its political implications visibly manifested themselves in struggles for greater lay control over the state church and for

anti-liquor legislation. The political strengths of low church pietists were twofold: their power among peasants in western Norway, which reinforced the territorial cleavage between east and west, and their criticism of "high church" official clergy, which reinforced the cleavage between the countryside and urban civil centers. But lay religious elements did not completely control the countryside, and many country dwellers resisted the insistence by pietists that they abandon their songs, legends, peasant arts and crafts and other old ways held by pietists to be contemptably worldly. In the novel Peace (1892), Arne Garborg depicted the ravages worked as hell-fire pietism joined with a new money economy to unsettle formerly self-sufficient rural communities. To Enok Haave--Garborg's central character based on the religious mania of his own father--"everything came back to self denial." "We should crucify the flesh with its lusts and desires; keep ourselves from 'gluttony and drunkenness'--cast off all that pertains to the desires of the eyes, the lusts of the flesh, and worldly pride."²⁷ But Haave's gloomy Haugeanism was too extreme for most as we witness in his aging neighbor's stern rebuke:

"Heh? Do you think that the Lord pays any attention to all that bleating? They say that you lie around and squeal and sing all day Sunday like a she-cat in heat. I think that the Lord would say what I do--that, by God, Enok Haave could find something more worth while to do."

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. . . . Because they are spiritually discerned."

"Heh? Don't come to me with your texts and your crucifixes. "I'm old enough to be your father. I have seen more of the world than you have, and I'd never believe that Our Lord can be the kind of scoundrel that you and the Haugeans think--that I wouldn't. We had a good parson before this one; old Parson Juel was the best one we've had and he didn't talk about hell, except for thieves and rascals, for God's Death, there are some of them that don't deserve anything better. And if He should cast anyone into hell, it would have to be those who think so ill of Him that they believe He should deal that way with people. If you don't get into hell, with all your bleating and whining, then, by God, you won't get into Heaven either--that's what I think."

Enok sighed. The poor old man.²⁸

Notwithstanding the uneven success of rural religious fervor, one issue--the language question--especially coalesced anti-urban emotions. Although the written Danish-Norwegian language conformed quite closely to the speech of the church, the schools and the educated urban people, it partook little of rural Norwegian peasant dialects. Nationalistic rural people resented both its close connection with polite Danish urban speech and the class distinctions it implied. When the self-educated son of a peasant, Ivar Aasan, developed a new form of written Norwegian that corresponded more closely to many dialects of the west Norwegian countryside, a large scale effort commenced to impose it as the national standard. It unleashed a political controversy that lasted for decades--fueling the fires of emerging national pride, sharpening

social cleavages between urban and rural and East and West, and prolonging lingering Norwegian antipathies against Denmark.²⁹

During the period of greatest emigration to America, therefore, long standing agrarian discontents remained alive in Norway, stirring partisan feelings. Because political partisanship sharpened during the 1870's and 1880's, later immigrants may have come to America more politicized than their predecessors. But given the continuing lag in rural people's involvement in elections, any heightened political sophistication and agrarian radicalism can be exaggerated. Be that as it may, disproportionate numbers of Norwegian immigrants carried with them marked agrarian sensitivities. It did not take much provocation for many a Norwegian-American to recall the aloof condescension of his betters back in the old country. The businesslike abruptness of a Minnesota townsman might do it, or a slightly contemptuous attitude of a Yankee-born census marshal, or the overbearing ecclesiastical authority of some transplanted Norwegian-American minister. These and other reminders of his lowly origins stirred old feelings, transferring to the midwestern small town, for example, ancient animosities against Norway's urban classes. "At the county seat," one of them later recalled, the Norwegian-American farmer

saw men and women who lived in houses that looked palatial to his hungering soul. They wore what he regarded as fine clothes and there could be no doubt that they ate good food. They were believed to have an easy time; they held nearly all the public offices, from which they pocketed large salaries; at least, so the alien believed. They controlled the affairs of the county and the alien was sure that through this control they were able to lay exorbitant taxes on the poor farmers' land.

The Yankees were "smart" and the immigrant had a lurking fear that he himself was not smart in the same way. Of course, he was handicapped all around; his ignorance of English put him at a disadvantage in all sorts of business transactions. It is therefore not strange that he came to believe that he was being exploited by the native businessmen, and often too the belief was well founded. Usury was a practice of which farmers complained most bitterly: in one case a helpless immigrant paid interest at the rate of fifty-five per cent. In their resentment the farmers sought out the traders and businessmen who spoke their own idiom. They felt safer with them; at least they could make them understand what they thought of men whom they suspected of dishonest dealings.³⁰

Whether or not such unpleasant memories of home would importantly shape his political choices in America depended greatly, as we shall see, on when a Norwegian emigrated in relation to what was activating American political life at the place of his settlement.

II

Between 1836 and 1848 only a few hundred Norwegians emigrated annually to America. Their numbers climbed to several thousand each year thereafter to the onset of the Civil War. During these years America's westward settlement swept around Lake Michigan and pushed on

northwestward into Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota. Norwegians established substantial settlements in southeastern and southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois, and these became the mother settlements for those that followed. Soon Scandinavian newcomers clustered in the northeastern and north-central regions of Wisconsin while other such settlements dotted Iowa's central and northeastern counties and southeastern parts of Minnesota. This modest immigration then ceased with the darkest years of the Civil War. By war's end, however, news reports and immigrant letters to land-poor neighbors and kin back home urged them now to emigrate, and thus began an unprecedented era of mass migration.

Departures swelled into three great waves between 1865 and 1915. Corresponding in length to America's business cycles and in magnitude to bulges of young adults in Norway's population, pushing and shoving each other for decent jobs and scarce housing, the first major exodus to America erupted in 1866 and lasted until the Panic of 1873. Immigrants during these years filled Wisconsin's western counties and spread across the northernmost counties in Iowa. Even greater numbers, however, rushed northward into the west-central prairies of Minnesota. By the late 1870's, as business conditions improved in the United States and as Norway's economy slipped into a lengthy

depression, "America fever" rose once again into the greatest emigrant tide of all. Discouraged with bleak prospects at home, tens of thousands of young people (maturing from the fertility surge of two decades before) gathered the needed resolve to uproot themselves in order to pursue better lives overseas. A torrent of new arrivals spilled into the Red River Valley of Minnesota and spread across eastern North Dakota before ebbing as the United States plunged into depression in the 1890's. The last wave of emigration, from 1899 to 1915, sent yet thousands more into western Dakota and to remaining lands in the mountain states, western Canada, and thereafter into America's burgeoning cities.³¹

Politically, in the Upper Midwestern states, Norwegian-American voters became a deciding element in Minnesota, held a balance-of-power position between the Germans and native-born Americans in Wisconsin, and exercised a minor but significant influence in Iowa.

III

Norwegian immigrants undertook only by degrees to enter the American political system. It took time for the Norwegian immigrant farmer to change his non-political habits and recognize "he is no longer in Norway but in a county where each citizen assists in the machinery of

government."³² An inclination to read religious publications, holding strictly secular political papers in lower regard, also inhibited learning about American politics.³³ Steadily however, partly by emulating his Protestant, native-born neighbors but mainly by building on his own experience of his adopted home, the Norwegian immigrant farmer began his apprenticeship in self-government.

Being relatively poor upon arrival and dearly anxious to obtain what he could not obtain in Norway--productive farms of his own--the typical immigrant initially had little interest in political affairs. Finding work in order to feed his family and save money for a down payment on land, later clearing and breaking ground to plant crops, erect buildings, purchase horses and machinery, and learn some English--these came first. After that, involvement in public affairs came as rural townships filled up sufficiently to merit local township government. With this, opportunities opened for Norwegians to learn about the governing machinery and elections, and to mingle with non-Norwegians at conventions to familiarize themselves with the American system. Those who first grasped the opportunities then became those who introduced their countrymen to, and urged their interest in, wider political matters. Still the Norwegian immigrant's shy deference towards native-born often persisted for years. "We," one

countryman accurately noted in 1893, "frequently consider ourselves smaller, and of less importance than we are," especially when facing "aggressive politicians" and those considered to be "genuine Americans," "thinking perhaps-- 'Yes, you are an 'American' superior to me, you can rush ahead, you have a right to; but I--must stand here, at a respectful distance, and look at you; for I am--a 'foreigner' or your inferior.'"³⁴ Throughout the initial decade or two of Americanization, Norwegians consequently confined their politics to holding township offices and voting at elections. Meanwhile a county's public offices usually remained secure in the hands of its native-born element.³⁵

Lower rates of turnout at the polls underscored the Norwegian immigrant's initial disinterest (Figure 1). By the 1890's, however, with township organization complete and the bulk of Norwegian settlement now established in the region, differences between Norwegian areas and the general populace faded. After 1896 voter interest in Norwegian settlements paralleled general turnout patterns that slipped into a steep decline from 1900 until 1930.³⁶ But beyond this overall tendency, settlements participated at different levels. Strictly farm areas, for example, differed from small towns and villages. Between 1880 and 1924, the farmer and his neighbors in predominantly

VOTER TURNOUT

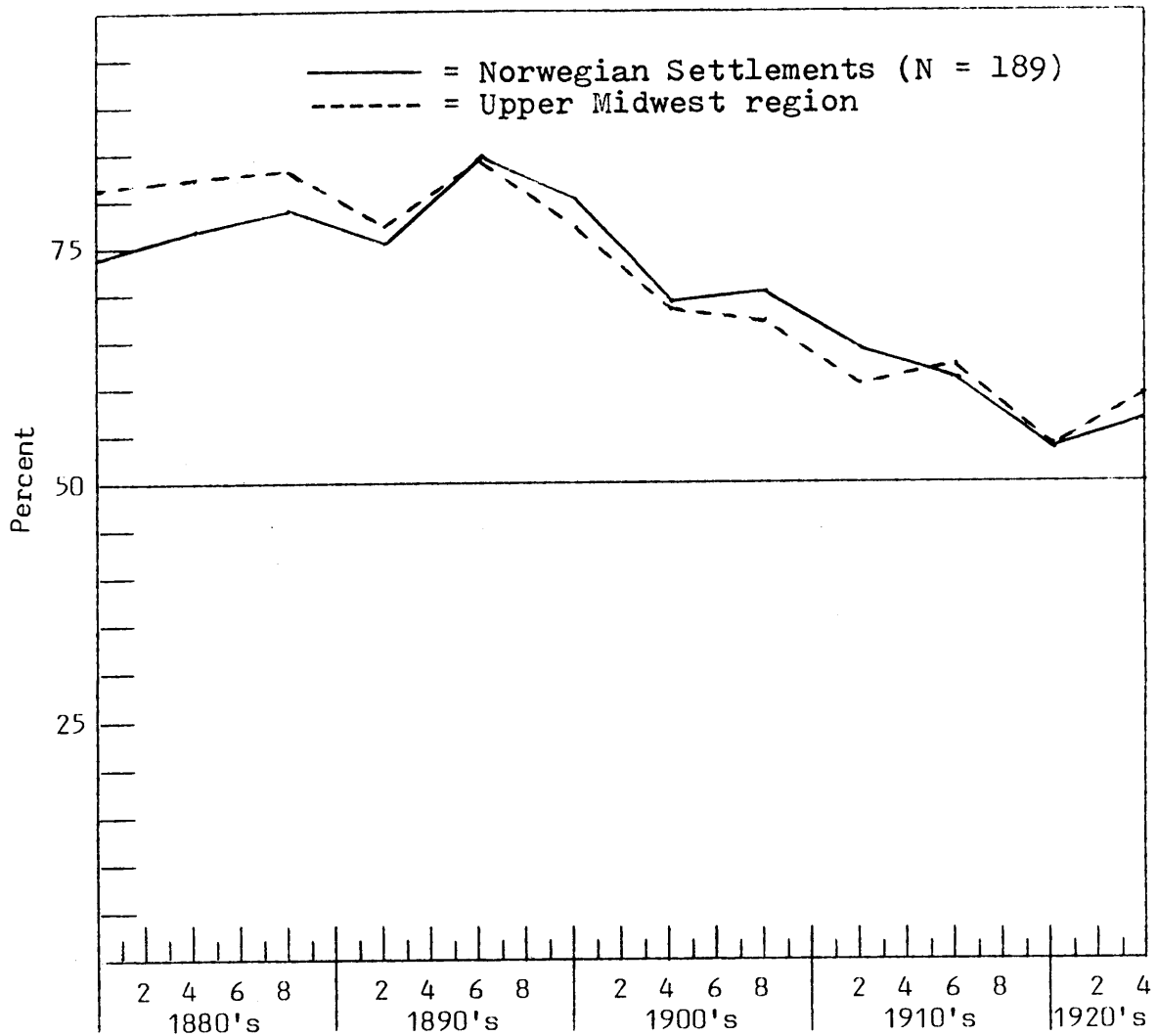


Figure 1. Upper Midwest: Estimated percent of eligible voters casting ballots in presidential elections, 1880-1924. Precinct returns incomplete before 1890.

Norwegian farm townships cast consistently lighter presidential votes, averaging 4 to 7 percentage points less than their small-town counterparts.³⁷

As Norwegian apprenticeship in township offices widened, so too did the horizons of their politically ambitious countrymen. County office first attracted their interest, and the aspirants most popular and conversant in English quickly capitalized on their countrymen's numerical strength and desire for recognition. Their reach extended even further in counties where sizable Norwegian settlements made them a factor that could be neither safely ignored nor antagonized. Here the most active Norwegian-American candidates might gain party preferment for nomination to state legislative offices. Only a few able immigrants, men with the confidence and aggressiveness needed to overcome deficient language skills in wider dealings with non-Norwegians, ordinarily reached for higher than township office. The adult immigrant rarely could shake his brogue entirely, and, being sensitive to ridicule before non-Norwegians, tended to hold back from other than local political involvements. Haldor E. Boen of Otter Tail County, Minnesota illustrated the process. Lacking confidence in his command of English, he spoke in a soft and halting fashion and usually avoided public address. But possessed of far more grit and tireless ambition than his

shy neighbors, he cast his eye beyond farming, teaching school and holding local office within a decade after arriving. He tried and failed on two occasions to represent his district on the county board of commissioners. But, undaunted, he aggressively pursued county political office and, after failing once again in an independent bid for election as state representative, won nomination and election as county register of deeds. This post Boen held for two terms until even higher office beckoned to him in 1892.³⁸ This path of township to county to state legislative officeholding repeated itself throughout immigrant localities of the rural Upper Midwest.

Four specific county offices most appealed to Norwegian immigrants: treasurer, register of deeds, sheriff and auditor. Occasionally Norwegians sought the offices of county recorder and clerk of court, but rarely did they interest themselves in becoming coroner, surveyor or superintendent of schools, all of which required at least some professional training. It has been estimated that the overall proportion of Norwegian born officeholders, therefore, lagged behind the county's percentage of Norwegian born residents.³⁹

Another contemporary historian has even gone further, asserting that Norwegians had not secured "their fair share of public offices, not in any state or community."⁴⁰

But close inspection of state offices throws this claim into question. True enough, not until after the Civil War did Norwegians become an influence in state legislatures, but neither had their population yet reached its greatest voting strength. Throughout the 1870's, reflecting these changing trends, increasing numbers of Norwegian-born senators and representatives entered state assemblies. And after 1880, no longer could claims be made (if they ever could be) that Norwegians lacked equal representation in the Upper Midwest as a whole (Figure 2). In fact, for all but two legislative sessions, Norwegian-born state legislators exceeded their proportionate share of representation.

This merits some additional discussion. With respect to these relationships within each state (Figure 3), one notices an under-representation for Norwegian-born legislators in Wisconsin. But more conspicuously, we see that marked over-representation in Minnesota buoyed the positive regional trend. What accounts for this? Part of the explanation undoubtedly has something to do with the Minnesota Norwegians comprising a greater percentage of the total population than in Wisconsin or Iowa. But equally important, the Norwegian's "share" of legislative offices depended on the dispersion or concentration of Norwegian people in the state's political units. Norwegian voters

LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATION: REGIONAL

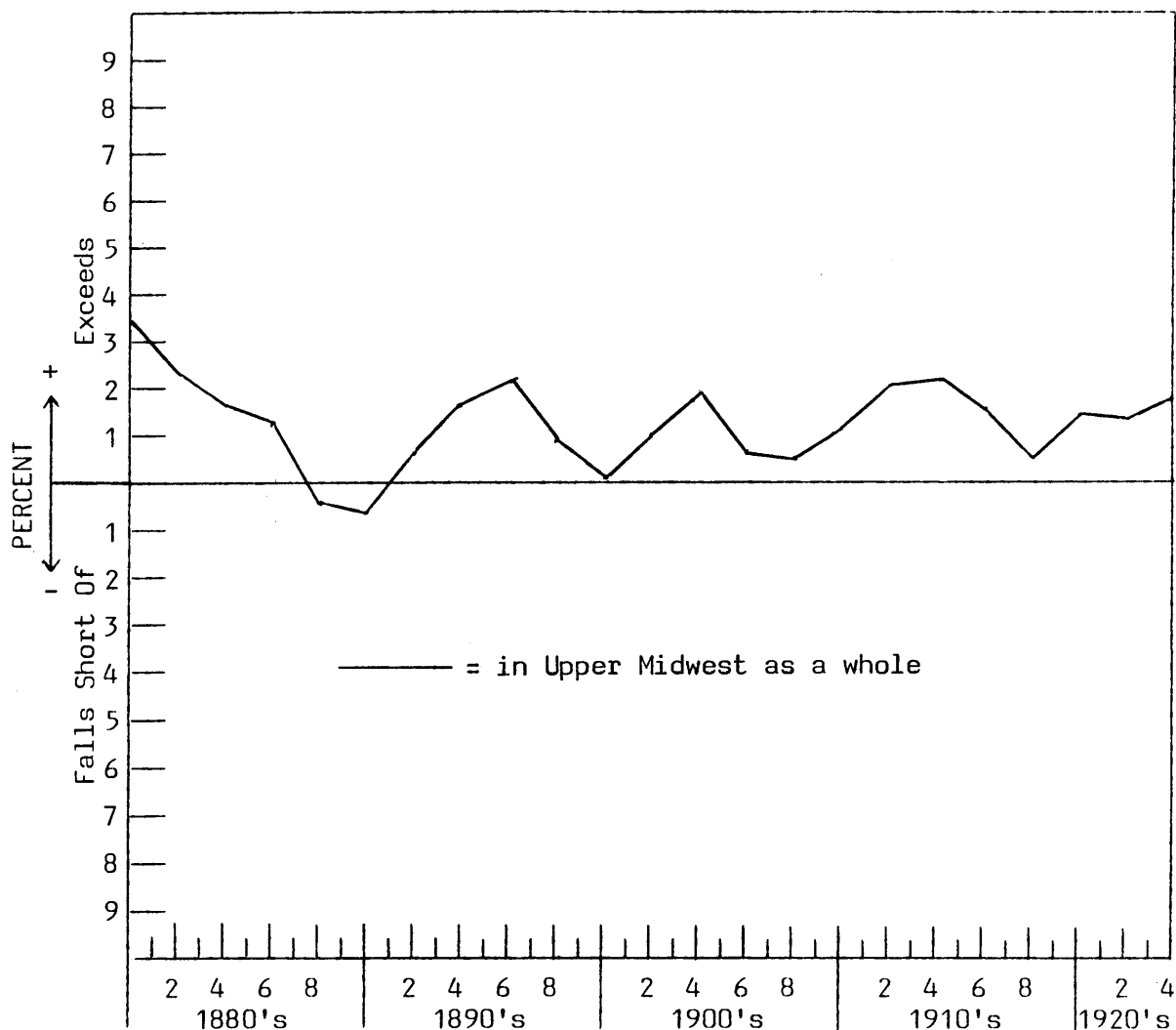


Figure 2. Extent that the percentage of Norwegian born state legislators equals the percentage of Norwegian born residents in the Upper Midwest. Nativity of legislators 1880-1924 derived from Iowa Official Register; Iowa Journal of the House of Representatives (1895); Wisconsin Blue Book; and the Legislative Manual of the State of Minnesota. Intercensal estimates of persons born in Norway are based on population figures in Volume I (Population) of each United States Census published for the years 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930. Information proved unavailable on the nativity of Iowa legislators serving in 1880 and 1882 and for Iowans elected to the senate in 1895.

LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATION: STATE

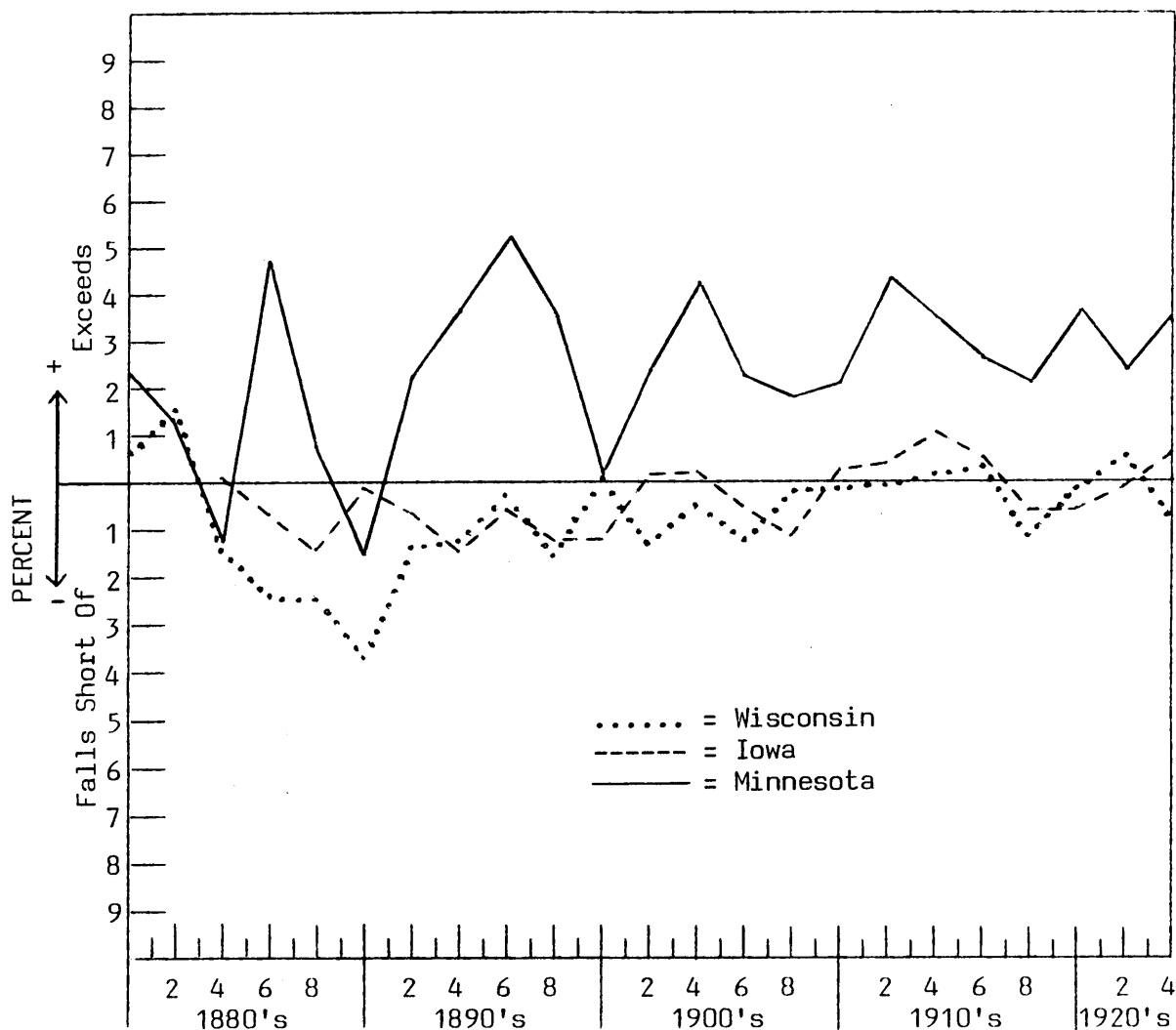


Figure 3. Extent that the percentage of Norwegian born state legislators in each state equals its percentage of Norwegian born residents. Nativity of legislators 1880-1924 from Iowa Official Register; Iowa Journal of the House of Representatives (1895); Wisconsin Blue Book; and the Legislative Manual of the State of Minnesota. Intercensal estimates of persons born in Norway based on population figures in Volume I (Population) of each United States Census for the years 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930. Information unavailable on the nativity of Iowa legislators serving in 1880 and 1882 and for Iowans elected to the senate in 1895.

could not hope to gain their due representation where they remained too dispersed across county lines or, conversely, where they concentrated themselves too solidly in only a very few counties. These imbalances seem to have characterized Norwegian settlements of Wisconsin and Iowa more than they did those in Minnesota.

Of course, the relationship of Norwegian officeholders to population cannot be so easily applied to the smaller number of higher state elective offices. For years the Republican party reserved token state offices for Norwegians, but it was only a matter of time before one would reach yet higher. Adolph Bierman, the nominee of Minnesota's Democratic party in 1883, became the first Norwegian-born politician to run for a governorship, but not until 1892 did a Norwegian meet with success. This happened, again in Minnesota, when Knute Nelson, a Republican, handily won election over two opponents. Revered by Norwegians as their pioneer politician who had successfully led the first great clash between Norwegian and native leadership for a congressional seat in 1882, he ended the final two decades of his life as the nation's first Norwegian-born United States senator. Not until 1906 did Wisconsin follow suit when it gave two terms as governor to Norwegian-born James Davidson. Iowa's Norwegians, on the other hand, never overcame their

numerical weakness to place one of their own in the governor's chair. But with Norwegians concentrated in the Fourth Congressional District, Gilbert N. Haugen successfully elevated himself to Congress in 1899 and achieved re-election repeatedly thereafter. Overall, between 1880 and 1924, the people of Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota sent one senator and fourteen congressmen of Norwegian birth or descent to Washington, twelve of whom served more than one term. Meanwhile, five men of Norwegian birth or parentage gained governorships in the region.⁴¹

These successes became a source of pride to many Norwegian-Americans, instilling in them feelings of closer belonging to America. But a politician needed more than a Norwegian name. He needed a favorable party affiliation and winning personal qualities to avoid shattering the Norwegian's fragile political cohesion. The candidate knew that his countrymen thought beyond simply elevating a Norwegian aspirant to office. His fortunes, he realized, were tied inescapably to the tug and pull of issues, groups and circumstances in the Upper Midwest, its states and localities. It is to these matters that our attention now turns.

NOTES

¹From a Norwegian language political circular translated and reprinted in the Arcadia (Wisc.) Leader, Oct. 23, 1908.

²H. H. Boyeson, "The Scandinavians in the United States," North American Review, CLV (1892), 530. A variety of such attempts are discussed in K. C. Babcock, The Scandinavian Element in the United States (Urbana, Ill., 1914), pp. 172-177.

³Babcock, Scandinavian Element, p. 181.

⁴Peter A. Munch, A Study of Cultural Change: Rural-Urban Conflicts in Norway (Oslo, 1956), pp. 32-33; Ronald G. Popperwell, Norway (New York, 1972), pp. 24, 36-37; Odd Sverre Lovoll, A Folk Epic: The Bygdelag in America (Boston, 1975), pp. 2-5.

⁵Kristopher Janson, "Norsemen in the United States," Cosmopolitan, IX (1890), 681.

⁶Babcock, Scandinavian Element, p. 181. See also Peter A. Munch's essay, "Social Class and Acculturation," in The Strange American Way: Letters of Caja Munch from Wiota, Wisconsin, 1855-1859, with An American Adventure (excerpts from "Vita Mea," an autobiography written in 1903), trans. H. Munch and P. A. Munch (Carbondale, 1970), p. 224.

⁷G. Amnéus, "Population," in Norway: Official Publication for the Paris Exhibition, 1900 (Kristiania, 1900), p. 88; Popperwell, Norway, pp. 19-20, 299-300; O. T. Bjanes, Norwegian Agriculture (Oslo, 1926), pp. 18-19.

⁸See Axel Steen, "Climate," in Norway: Official Publication for the Paris Exhibition, pp. 45-57; Popperwell, Norway, p. 19; Bjanes, Norwegian Agriculture, pp. 21, 23.

⁹Amnéus, "Population," Norway: Official Publication for the Paris Exhibition, pp. 90, 99-100.

¹⁰Ibid.; Michael Drake, Population and Society in Norway 1735-1865 (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 81-82, 95-99, 101, 106; Bjanes, Norwegian Agriculture, p. 24.

¹¹The tone of Norwegian sensitivities toward their Swedish "big brother" in the 1830's is related in Samuel Laing, Journal of a Residence in Norway During the Years 1834, 1835, and 1836 (2nd ed.; London, 1837), pp. 196-199. The capsule summary of political developments is drawn from several sources, including B. J. Hovde, The Scandinavian Countries, 1720-1865: The Rise of the Middle Classes (Boston, 1943), I, 177-228; II, 510-572; Karen Larsen, A History of Norway (New York, 1948); Thomas K. Derry, A History of Modern Norway 1814-1972 (Oxford, 1973), pp. 1-96; Popperwell, Norway, pp. 65-142; Per Bang, Norway La Norvège (New York, 1971), pp. 23-24.

¹²N. A. Grevstad, "Participation in American Politics," in Norwegian Immigrant Contributions to America's Making, ed. Harry Sundby-Hansen (New York, 1921), p. 107. See also Sigvart Luther Rugland, "The Norwegian Press of the Northwest, 1885-1900" (Master's thesis, State University of Iowa, 1929), pp. 55-56; Kendrick C. Babcock, "The Scandinavian Contingent," Atlantic Monthly, LXXVII (1896), 663; Babcock, The Scandinavian Element, p. 140; Boyesen, "Scandinavian in the United States," p. 527.

¹³Leola Nelson Bergmann, Americans From Norway (Philadelphia, 1950), pp. 33-34; Laing, Residence in Norway, pp. 203-207.

¹⁴Bergmann, Americans From Norway, p. 35; Laing, Residence in Norway, p. 115; Stein Rokkan, "Geography, Religion and Social Class: Cross Cutting Cleavages in Norwegian Politics," Party Systems and Voter Alignments, ed. S. M. Lipset and S. Rokkan (New York, 1967), p. 379.

¹⁵Derry, History of Modern Norway, p. 27, suggests that "by the 1870's Norway, with an enfranchised population of only 7 or 8 per cent, restricted the right to vote to a very much smaller section of the community than did Disraelian Britain or many nations of the Continent."

¹⁶Rokkan, "Geography, Religion and Social Class," pp. 379-385; Derry, History of Modern Norway, pp. 25-27; Merle Curti, et al. Making of an American Community (Stanford, Calif., 1959), p. 296.

¹⁷Drake, Population and Society in Norway, pp. 73-74. Ingrid Semmingsen, in her "Dissolution of Estate Society in Norway," Scandinavian Economic History Review, II (1954), 181, reports that "while the number of freeholders increased from 1801 to 1855 by only 27 percent, the number of crofters, with or without land, nearly doubled, and the number of day-labourers was trebled."

¹⁸Laing, Residence in Norway, p. 321.

¹⁹Rokkan, "Geography, Religion and Social Class," pp. 408-411; Semmingsen, "Dissolution of Estate Society," pp. 170, 181; Hovde, Scandinavian Countries, I, 63-64, 289-290; II, 620-622; Munch, Study of Cultural Change, pp. 33-35; Laing, Residence in Norway, pp. 321-322; Bergmann, Americans From Norway, pp. 39-40.

²⁰Drake, Population and Society in Norway, pp. 120, 148, 159; Derry, History of Modern Norway, pp. 29-31.

²¹Henry Valen and Daniel Katz, Political Parties in Norway: A Community Study (Oslo, 1967), p. 19; Laing, Residence in Norway, pp. 118-119, 389-390.

²²Ingrid Semmingsen, "Norwegian Emigration in the Nineteenth Century," Scandinavian Economic History Review, VIII (1960), 156.

²³Arne Garborg, Peace, trans. Phillips Dean Carleton (New York, 1929), pp. 85-86.

²⁴Rokkan, "Geography, Religion, and Social Class," p. 391.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 368-377. See also Munch, Study of Cultural Change, pp. 30-63; Popperwell, Norway, pp. 32-33.

²⁶Munch, "Social Class and Acculturation," pp. 198-200; Rokkan, "Geography, Religion and Social Class," pp. 368-369; Derry, History of Modern Norway, pp. 27-29.

²⁷Garborg, Peace, p. 58.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 140-141.

²⁹The background and ramifications of this issue are ably summarized in Rokkan, "Geography, Religion and Social Class," pp. 372-374. See also Derry, History of Modern Norway, pp. 76-77; Oscar J. Falnes, National Romanticism in Norway (New York, 1933); Hovde, Scandinavian Countries,

II, 467-469; Harry Eckstein, Division and Cohesion in Democracy: A Study of Norway (Princeton, 1966), pp. 43-47; Popperwell, Norway, pp. 192-194, 198, 210.

³⁰ Laurence M. Larson, Log Book of a Young Immigrant (Northfield, Minn., 1939), p. 68.

³¹ Semmingsen, "Norwegian Emigration in the Nineteenth Century," 150-160; Einar Haugen, The Norwegian Language in America: A Study in Bilingual Behavior (2nd ed.; Bloomington, Ind., 1969), I, 23-29; Carlton C. Qualey, Norwegian Settlement in the United States (Northfield, Minn., 1938), pp. 4-9.

³² Theodore C. Blegen, Norwegian Migration to America: The American Transition (Northfield, Minn., 1940), p. 310.

³³ Arlo W. Anderson, The Norwegian-Americans (Boston, 1975), p. 41, quoting Knud Langeland, Nordmaendene i Amerika (Chicago, 1888), p. 97.

³⁴ Minneapolis (Minn.) The North, Aug. 23, 1893.

³⁵ Babcock, Scandinavian Element, pp. 142-144. Local examples are detailed in Curti, Making of an American Community, pp. 103-104, 302-303, 315-319, 339-341; Larson, Log Book, pp. 75-78.

³⁶ Walter Dean Burnham, "The Changing Shape of the American Political Universe," American Political Science Review, LIX (1965), 7-11. For discussion of the method I used to estimate levels of voter turnout, refer Appendix A.

³⁷ The only exception to the average spread in turnout rates occurred in the election of 1916 when 8.3 percentage points divided Norwegian farm from small town/village precincts.

³⁸ Fergus Falls (Minn.) Weekly Journal, June 23, 1892, Feb. 15, 1894; John W. Mason, ed., History of Otter Tail County Minnesota (Indianapolis, 1916), II, 34-35.

³⁹ Babcock, Scandinavian Element, p. 147. See also Larson, Log Book, pp. 77-78.

⁴⁰ Olaf M. Norlie, History of the Norwegian People in America (Minneapolis, 1925), p. 483. See also Babcock, "The Scandinavian Contingent," p. 667. A contrary view

concluding that "Norwegians have had about their 'share' of public offices" is Grevstad, "Participation in American Politics," p. 117.

⁴¹Norlie, History of the Norwegian People in America, pp. 489-491.

CHAPTER II
NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN POLITICS:
UNITY AND DIVERSITY

I

In the Norwegian settlements of the Upper Midwest political life assumed its character through the intersection of regional development and rhythms of important national and local events. Significantly, the three new states of Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota passed through their political youths at the very moment that overwhelming national questions associated with the Civil War came to the fore. Nonlocal politics became ascendant, and state party lines and images congealed around this cluster of issues. Although it can be said that the Republican party became the new political home of earlier Whigs, Know-Nothings, Free Soilers and other basically Protestant reform groupings, the Civil War essentially moored and secured in place these coalition elements within a single continuing party and made Republicanism synonymous with patriotism, anti-slavery and high moral ideals. The experience left an indelible imprint on midwestern politics

when conventional ethnic, religious and class politics again resumed center stage.¹

Although left discredited in this northern region of free-labor states, the Democratic party restlessly unearthed whatever issues it could (for example, black suffrage, nativism, prohibition, monopoly capitalism) in order to score on Republican weaknesses. And backed by most Americans of German and Irish background, Democrats maintained their party strength in the face of slim but consistent Republican pluralities in presidential contests. The Democrats pressed especially hard whenever defections and assorted third party movements threatened to drain Republican ranks. Economic dislocations and sudden shifts in the balance of sensitive ethnic and religious or urban and rural relations stood out as the most volatile threats. Alert to such problems, both parties worked to devise "balanced tickets" of major coalition elements. But try as they might to avoid truly explosive appeals to deep seated, politically divisive ethnic and religious prejudices--since such appeals could backfire--their intent occasionally fell before political expediency and desires to appease coalition elements. Politicians and party organizations, especially at the local level, frequently gave in to political opportunity and attempted to satisfy or divert voter attention by

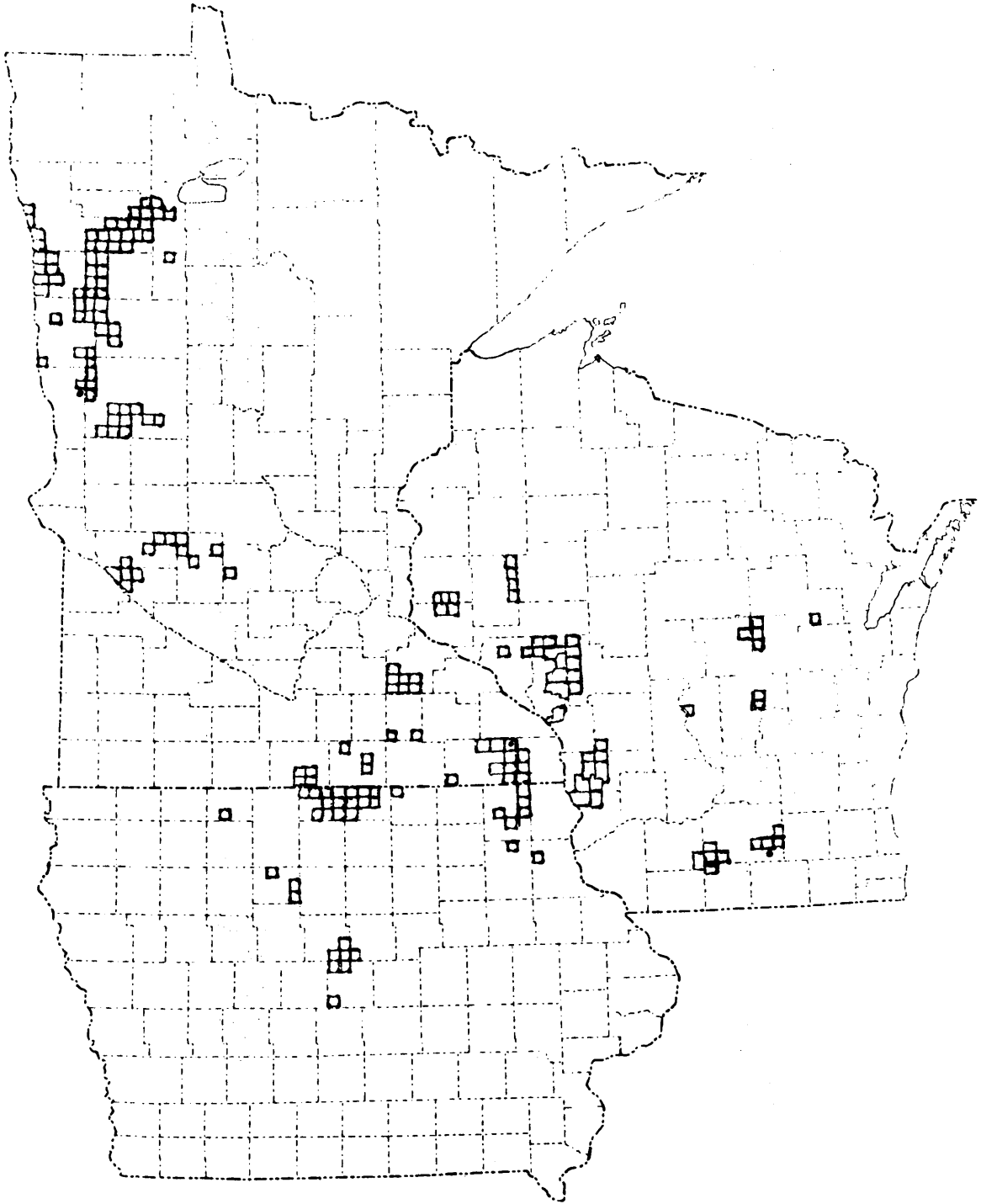


Figure 4. Location of predominantly Norwegian-American settlements selected for study.

waving the red flags of liquor control legislation, Sunday observance laws, nativist slights or inattention to this or that nationality group.

In the immediate postward political atmosphere, Norwegian settlements of the Upper Midwest consistently cast their lot with the Republican party. And as historical analyses have long suggested, and Figure 5 bears out, most Norwegian townships and villages down through the 1880's and beyond, save in 1924, found Republican presidential candidates more to their liking than did the region as a whole. True enough, paralleling regional trends down to 1892, Republican impulses waned among Norwegian townships. But thereafter only two temporary reversals marred their strong Republican voting record--both of which were led by insurgent Republicans.

What led Norwegians to embrace Republicanism as they did? Facing limited party alternatives with the limited issues that divided these parties, Norwegians saw little choice but to join the Republicans. Initially, evidently goaded by Know-Nothing agitation and impressed by the agrarian egalitarianism of the Democratic party, their early settlements voted Democratic in the late 1840's and early 1850's.² But once the Republican party emerged to make free-soil arguments the leading issue, most heavily Norwegian areas readily abandoned the Democracy and aligned

REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL SUPPORT

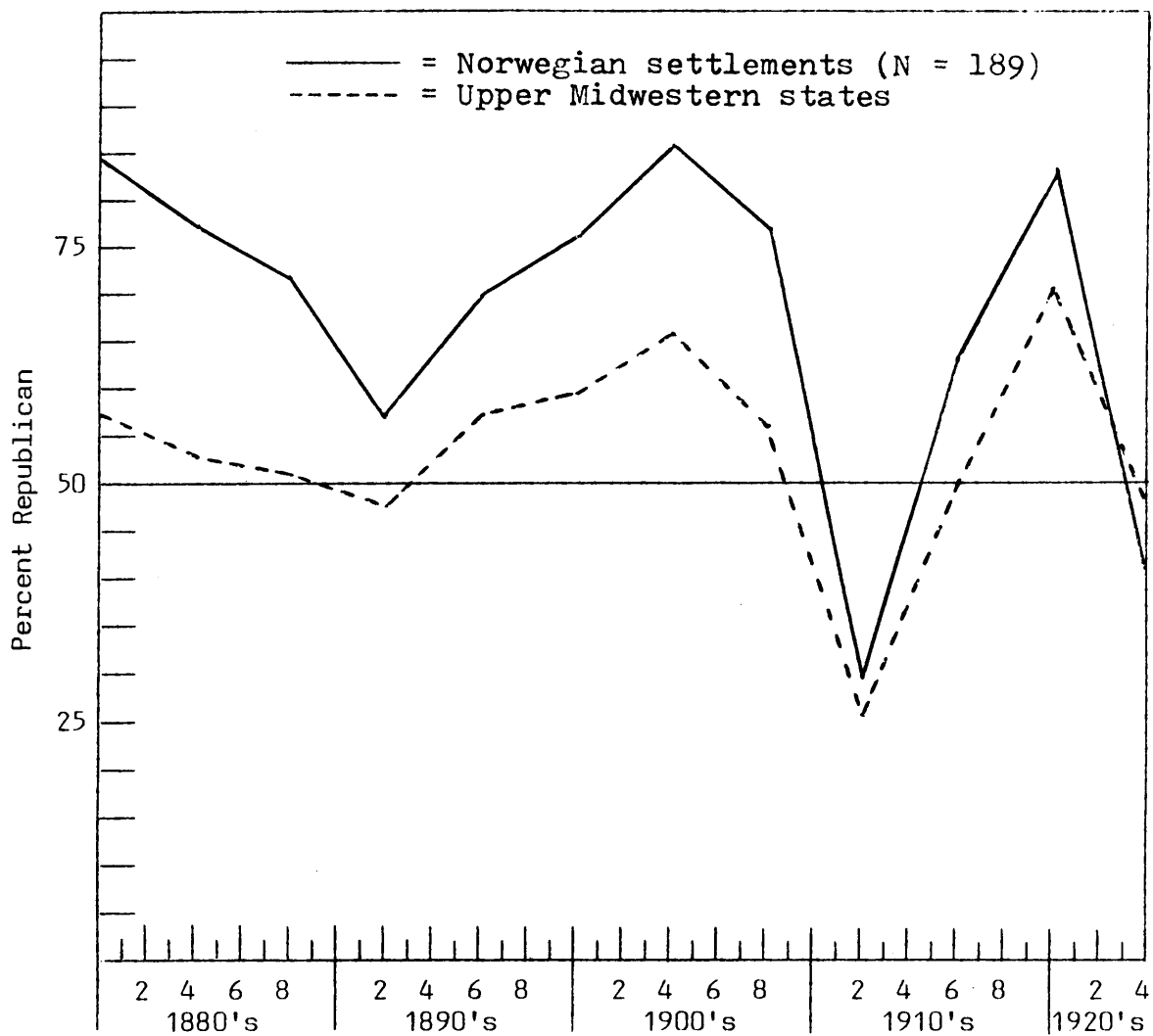


Figure 5. Upper Midwest: Republican share of the total vote for president, 1880-1924, in predominantly Norwegian precincts and in the region as a whole. Precinct returns are less complete before 1890.

themselves with the new party. Several among the leading Norwegian clergy, however, less readily embraced the anti-slavery cause. When Norwegian Synod pastors took a stand that appeared to condone slavery--one that acknowledged it to be evil but not in itself a sin according to scripture--the Reverend C. L. Clausen of Mitchell County, Iowa broke with his colleagues. Clausen's instinct for ethnic leadership had led him first into religious journalism and then into promoting Norwegian immigration, but now the conservative clergy's announcement so offended his humanitarian impulses and hatred of slavery that he threw himself into politics. Prominent opponents declared him to be misguided on natural rights and declared that abolitionists held little true regard for the "poor Negroes," but the energetic Clausen pressed on.³ When in 1856 Clausen accepted a Republican nomination for the Iowa house of representatives, his statement to the influential Norwegian newspaper Emigranten voiced popular sentiments that so many Norwegian settlers would echo:

My chief consideration is the hope of uniting all our countrymen here in Northern Iowa in the Republican party; for the realization of whose principles I, with God's help, entertain the only hope for checking the further spread of slavery and for preserving our free republican institutions from destruction.⁴

Clausen's easy victory in the November elections signaled the emerging trend of Norwegian alignments.

After the war, issues continued to give order and meaning to the Norwegian immigrant's political world, but how other social, ethnic and religious groups responded to these issues often determined whether Norwegians also embraced them or suspiciously withheld their support. The anti-slavery issue had carried Norwegians into Lincoln's party and the exhilarating prestige that victory brought perhaps predisposed later arrivals to join it. Once in, religious and ethnic hatreds helped keep their Republican loyalties alive. Even though Norwegians resented the strain of anti-immigrant and culturally nativist feelings that characterized the elitism of many Republicans, Democratic party characteristics appeared even more distasteful and repugnant. Norwegian animosity did not particularly extend to southerners although they rejected the pro-Southern policies of that party before the Civil War. More important, the Democratic party repelled them because it evidently served as the political home of most American Catholics. The Norwegians' visceral, unstudied response from ages past found reinforcement in the Protestant moralism and anti-Catholic tendencies of a great many Republican party adherants.⁵

Ole Rølvaag, in the final two volumes of his immigrant trilogy, explored the veiled hostility corroding relations between Norwegian Lutherans and Irish Catholics living in

the Spring Creek settlement. "You will have to find another playmate, Peder," Beret Holm instructs her son.

"Why?"

"Because you are Norwegian and they are Irish! . . . But likely you don't understand that yet, and I couldn't expect you to."

"They are people just the same," objected Peder sagely, in the utmost candor.

The mother smiled ever so little.

"But they are of another kind. They have another faith. And that is dangerous. For it is with such things as with weeds. The authorities made a terrible mistake when they threw us in with those people. And it is no better for them than it is for us. We should never have had the school together--you can't mix wheat and potatoes in the same bin."⁶

As the emotional and imaginative Peder reaches manhood in the 1890's, only to marry Susie Doheny, an Irish Catholic, his brother cannot contain his bitter embarrassment.

"Every place I go people pounce on me, asking me how the Nordlaending is getting along with his Irish wife. They all grin wickedly . . . want to know how it feels to be related to a lot of Catholics . . . how much the pope is taxing you . . . when you're joining in the war on the Protestants---" For a moment Hans could not go on. "You've disgraced the whole family . . . that's what you've done!"⁷

Although explicit expressions of animosity abate somewhat, the unmistakable feelings continue to linger beneath the surface of relations in the settlement, eventually erupting again when Peder explores his possibilities in politics as a Republican candidate for county commissioner. His opponent accuses Peder and the Lutheran minister of "scheming to make the whole country Lutheran" while Dennis O'Hara confides to his friend Peder that the "slogan" in his

neighborhood is that "no self-respecting Irish Catholic would ever disgrace himself by voting for a Norwegian Lutheran."⁸

Scandinavians, an observer pointed out in 1892, "are Protestant enough to satisfy the most fastidious Catholic-hater, for a Catholic in Norway or Sweden is a rare, suspicious object."⁹ But, although organized anti-Catholicism was a dormant heritage in their Lutheran homeland, Norwegian immigrants' confrontation with America's pluralist political makeup forced their unyielding Protestantism to the surface. "Everywhere and always they are uncompromising enemies of the Roman Catholic church," wrote historian Kendrick Charles Babcock in 1914, adding that "so strong is this feeling that it colors consciously or unconsciously, their relations in politics and society in the United States."¹⁰ This low tolerance for Catholicism stemmed less from "knowledge or close observation," he observed, than from what amounted to "an instinct, coming down from Reformation times."¹¹ In the United States, Scandinavian anti-Catholicism expressed itself primarily in a political hatred of the American Irish.¹² "I have heard it cited, not once but a hundred times," noted another observer in the 1890's,

as a good reason for voting the Republican ticket that the Irish were all Democrats. It is no use to contradict this assertion, for the sentiment that

Democracy and Irish nationality are synonymous terms is so deeply rooted in the Scandinavian agricultural population that it will require . . . a surgical operation to eradicate it. If . . . the Republicans should succeed in detaching the Irish in large numbers from their first allegiance, they must be prepared for a large defection of Scandinavian voters in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin and Illinois.¹³

Most contemporaries, and surely all politicians, agreed that "the whole political organization of the Scandinavians," at bottom, had "chiefly taken place under Republican leadership and in strong opposition to Catholic Irish and South German Democrats."¹⁴

Therefore, in America the Norwegians saw no alternative to the Grand Old Party. "The history and record of the Catholic power," wrote one reader to the Chicago Skandinaven,

is black, blood stained and rotten, and cannot bear the light of day. . . . Its sole aim and struggle is to obtain complete power.

Best to keep politics and religion separate, in general, but as we all know, the Roman Catholic Church is in politics, and on all fours, too; and whether or not it shall become supreme in this country when it has been repudiated and broken in Europe remains with us to say when we cast our ballots.¹⁵

Apart from the temperance-minded Republican affiliation of Minnesota's Archbishop John Ireland, comparatively few important American Catholics became involved with the G.O.P. during this era to change the "Catholic-equals-Democrat" perceptions of Norwegian-Americans. And they acted accordingly, brooking little drift toward the

political home of most of the nation's Catholic voters. Between 1880 and 1924, only once--when incumbent Woodrow Wilson ran in 1916--did Democrats successfully attract an average 31 percent of the presidential vote cast by the midwestern Norwegian-American settlements. At the opposite extreme, the 1924 Democratic candidate, John Davis, obtained only 3 percent of their vote when many swung behind Robert M. LaFollette's third-party bid for the presidency. Overall, however, this period of forty-four years witnessed a scant 16 percent of the average Norwegian-American settlements' vote going to Democratic presidential candidates.

The Republican leanings of Norwegian communities is thus unmistakable, being well known and amply documented. But to stop here is grossly to oversimplify the matter and give the mistaken impression that Norwegians responded in lock-step to the Republican call. The average conceals much variation; local Republican committeemen between 1880 and 1924 could not everywhere report to state headquarters, "Nothing to worry about here." Only when we recognize the distribution and sources of Norwegian departure from their fundamental Republican leanings can we more fully appreciate the richness of their political experience.

Norwegian disunity rose and fell in three great tides. This is shown in Figure 6. Quite visibly the post-Civil War unanimity had by 1888 lost its coherence. Thereafter only in 1904 and in 1920 did these former bastions of Republicanism reassert their earlier solidarity. Disunity traced itself not to vigorous two party competition. Rather, Norwegian turbulence in the region originated when third party movements split off from the Republicans. The People's party in the 1890's, Theodore Roosevelt's "Bull Moose" party effort of 1912, and Robert LaFollette's Progressive party campaign of 1924 amply demonstrated the undependable, loosening grip of Republican party ties on many settlements and the unpredictability of Norwegian popular voting in a regional sense. Why?¹⁶

II

Recent historical accounts of nineteenth century popular voting suggest that religious beliefs relating to moral reform issues in politics accounted for the greatest differences in Norwegian party alignments. The specific suggestion is that theological differences corresponded closely to the party preferences of different nationality and religious groups during this period.¹⁷ In the case of Norwegian voters, I anticipated that this would

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS:
THE LACK OF POLITICAL UNANIMITY

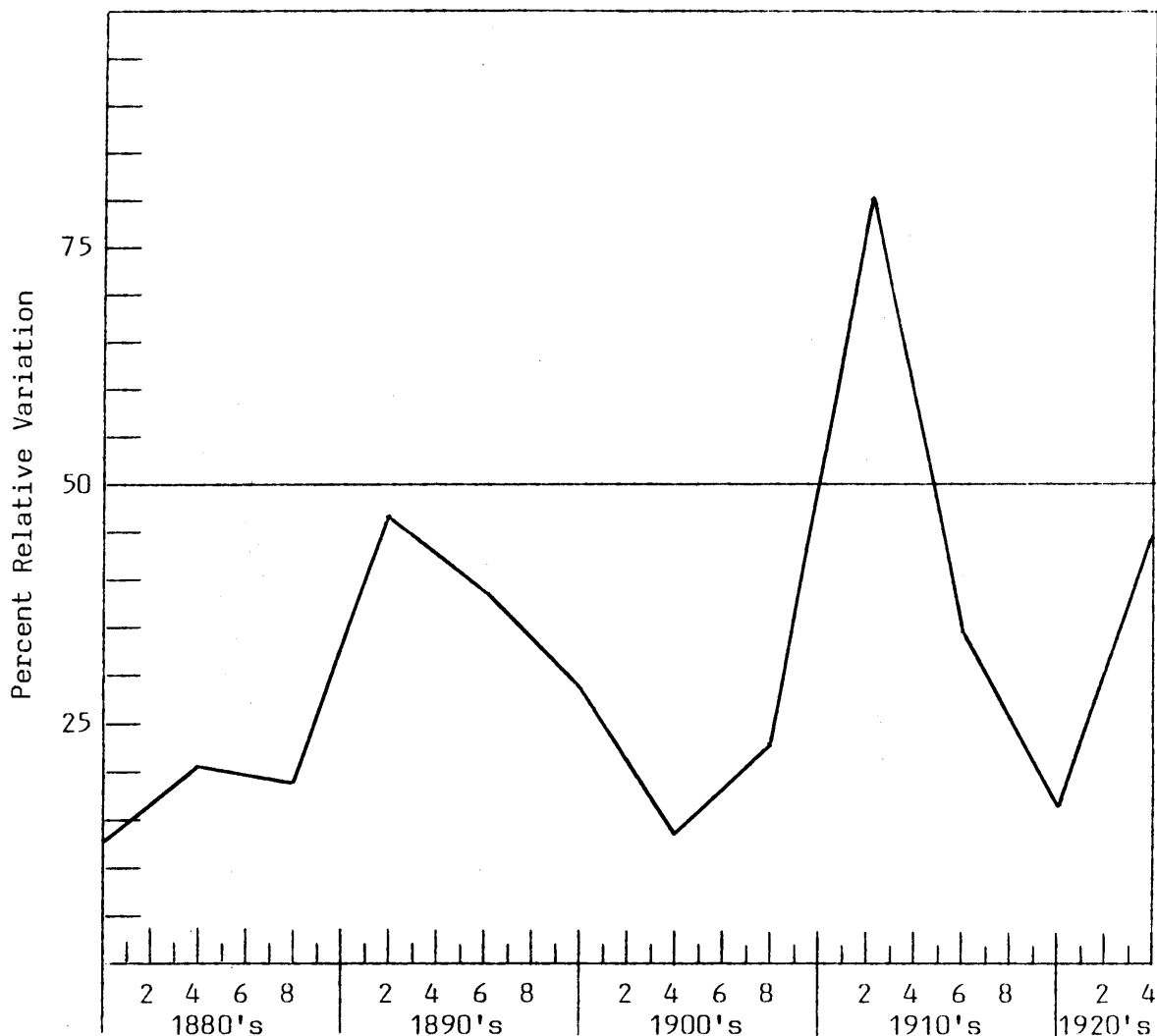


Figure 6. Extent of disagreement between Norwegian settlements in their votes for Republican presidential candidates within the Upper Midwest, 1880-1924. This is expressed as a percentage that Republican township votes are scattered about their mean. To make comparable the standard deviation of one election to that of another, each of which measures dispersion of votes around an entirely different mean, I have divided each standard deviation by the mean of the distribution of Republican votes. The resulting coefficients of variability yield what amounts to the percent of scatter in votes from the mean and permits direct comparisons of one year's percentage figure to others. Precinct returns are less complete before 1890.

particularly be so because their settlements so often felt the bitter theological strife that rent Norwegian-American Lutheran synods.

Although this story of ecclesiastical turmoil is lengthy and complex, the broad theological outlines of the conflict are clear.¹⁸ Disagreements between "high church" and "low church" elements expressed themselves in three graduated theological orientations: orthodox, Grundtvigian and Haugean. Orthodoxy, representing high church ideals, stressed orderly institutional church life: church authority, conservative doctrine, and a relatively elaborate ritual conducted by properly trained ministers. In contrast, the low church impulse reflected the pietistic Haugean movement of early nineteenth century Norway, which stressed lay preaching, personal religious experience (awakening), repentance (public confession), and conversion. While holding deep respect for the Bible and doctrine, low church adherents attached particular importance to practicing a "true Christian life" by abstaining themselves from such worldly pleasures as card playing, tobacco smoking, use of alcohol and social dancing. Between these two polar church positions stood a third tendency of moderation--one that reflected in large measure the influence of N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783-1872), a Danish theologian. This approach underscored the

churchly function to provide the sacraments, but attacked the "high church" tendency toward religious indifference that theological rationalism had allegedly brought, and minimized the "low church" demands for awakening, conversion and ascetic living. Attacks by high and low church groups against this more optimistic, yet restrained, approach condemned it to an irregular and flickering life, but the blend of views comprising this orientation helped pave the way by 1890 for the new United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America.

In Norway, high church and low church differences had worked themselves out within the state church. But in the freer religious atmosphere of America the pot boiled over in the absence of state restraints.¹⁹ The turmoil that rolled across St. Luke's congregation in Ole E. Rølvaag's novel Peder Victorious (1929) depicted the religious strife. Here in the Spring Creek settlement, where what began as a series of Sunday meetings by the more "quickeners" in the congregation, quickly grew the desire among them for a new congregation "consisting exclusively of confessing Christians." Assuming the proportions of a local revival, one-fourth of St. Luke's parishioners--stirred by the fervor of personal testimonials and expressions of anxiety about sin "where the World had got the upper hand"--moved to set up their own

church. When the remaining members of St. Luke's tried to hold back the dissenters on grounds that the church constitution gave them no right to resign, the congregation only became further divided against itself. "Oh, ho--so that was the idea," argued the dissenters: "St. Luke's intended to set up a state church and coerce people by force?" What about in the days of Hans Nielson Hauge (1771-1824), Norway's great revivalist? "Did he ask the State Church of Norway for permission to go the way the Lord pointed out to him?"²⁰ "This matter of what was right according to the will of God," writes Rølvaag, "was so serious that people quarreled about it until they became hoarse of voice and dark of mein. . . ."

Neighbors who formerly had lived peacefully together, and had exchanged work whenever convenient, finding much pleasure therein, would not now look at one another. The threshing seemed so odd that fall: one's nearest neighbor might be working just across the road, and never so much as look up. The ill will abroad changed into hatred; even families were torn asunder.²¹

Rølvaag's treatment of religious dissension reflected not simply isolated instances among Norwegian-American settlements. Leola N. Bergmann, in writing of Madison, Minnesota, where she spent her youthful years, notes that despite the small size of the Norwegian town, it possessed "two Norwegian Lutheran churches, even though it was post-1917 and the official merger had already taken place. As far as co-operation was concerned they might

have been a Jewish synagogue and a Roman Catholic church."²² Another careful observer of Norwegian communities remarks: "It has been said that if you travel through rural Wisconsin and you get to a crossroad with two churches, one on each side of the road, you may be sure that you have entered a Norwegian settlement."²³ My own information also bears out this observation: more than three of every five townships selected for analysis contained two or more churches of competing Lutheran synods in 1917.

As to whether these differing doctrinal outlooks expressed themselves politically, "ethnocultural historians" mandate that "the more pietistic the group's outlook the more intensely Republican its partisan affiliation."²⁴ By this reasoning, the most evangelical Norwegian elements (that is, the predominantly Hauge and United Norwegian Lutheran townships) should have voted more staunchly Republican than the less firmly aligned, conservative, high-church Norwegian Synod areas. But, interestingly enough, presidential contests yield no such pattern.²⁵ The slight voting differences shown in Figure 7 give insignificant support to the supposed political importance of religious doctrine. Certainly minor differences of from 5 to 10 percentage points account for little of the 20 to 30 percentage-point spread in

SYNODAL AFFILIATIONS AND
REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL SUPPORT

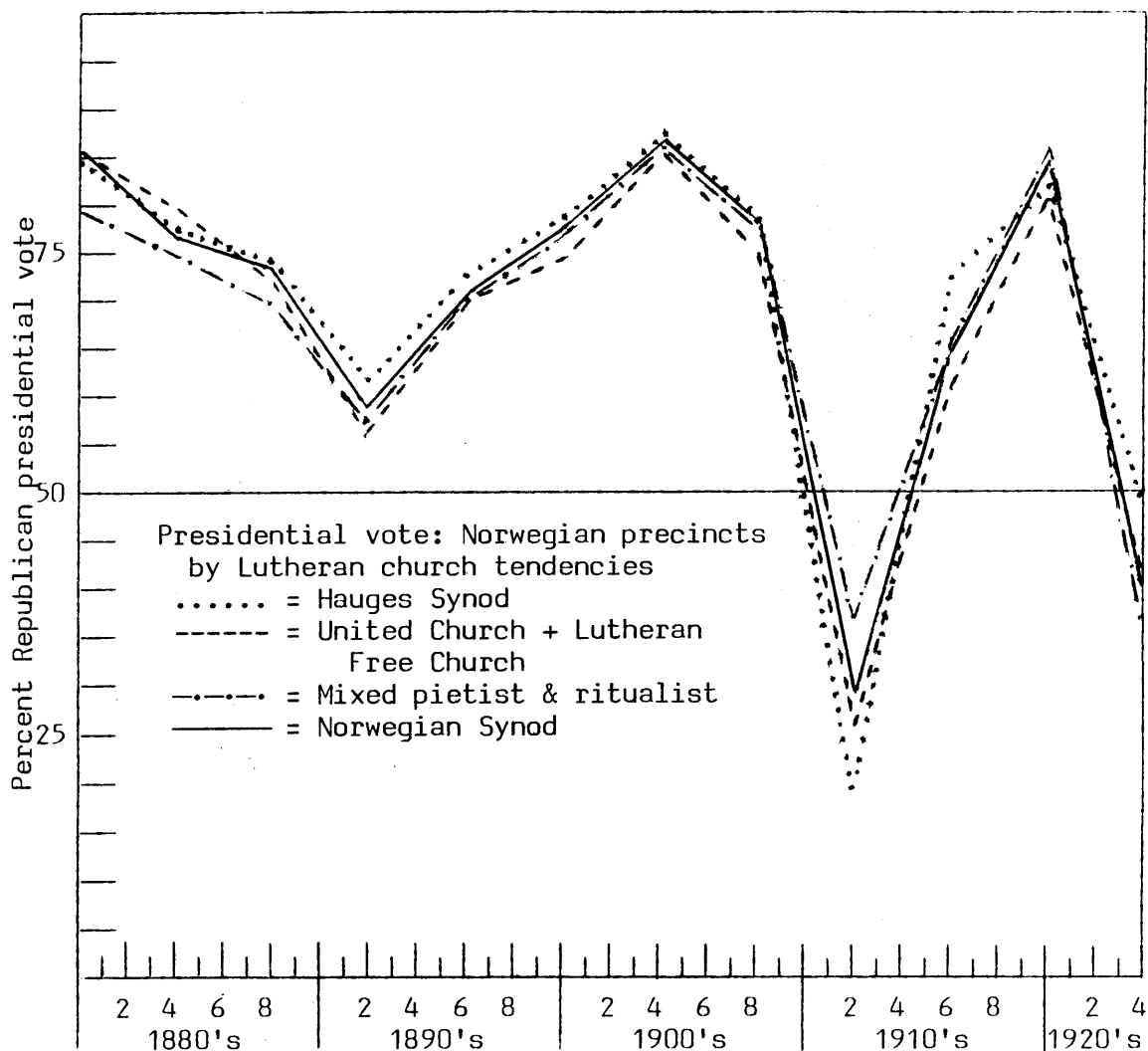


Figure 7. Upper Midwest: Republican share of presidential vote in Norwegian settlements according to their predominant Norwegian Lutheran church affiliations as of 1915. The doctrinal orientation of each precinct is classified as to whether an estimated one-half or more of its membership belonged to a single Norwegian synod. Others are included in the "mixed" category. Precinct returns are less complete before 1890.

Republican votes from among Norwegian settlements.

Although the 1912 election appears to be an exception in that Haugean settlements deserted President Taft's standard Republicanism, the results actually stemmed from other factors.²⁶

Why did contrasting doctrinal orientations leave such a minimal impression on Norwegian immigrant politics while they sowed such discord and bitterness within Norwegian communities? Part of the reason may be that the liturgical Norwegian Synod was high church only in a relative sense; some low church ideals had crept into the state church of Norway.²⁷ But if such a basic pietism characterized all Norwegian churches, it seems odd indeed that Norwegian settlements fragmented as much as they did. The main answer probably lies elsewhere.

A more persuasive reason, it seems to me, is that doctrinal differences left an indistinct political imprint because in America they were forced to compete against strongly felt social animosities also carried by the emigrant from Norway. In the old country, low church impulses had paralleled rural Norwegian class antagonisms toward office-holding classes, mutually reinforcing one another in struggles against the traditional values and status of the liturgical Norwegian State Church. This ensuing religious discord came to be one part of the larger

struggle between commoners and officialdom.²⁸ But in America the untutored newcomer found a baffling two-party system where economic reform and evangelical reform impulses did not unambiguously dwell together in the same party. He found the Republican party, on the one hand, infused with evangelical reformers and, on the other hand, dominated by old stock "Yankee" upper classes. Within the Norwegian group at large, old country religious and social antagonisms still intensified Lutheran doctrinal struggles.²⁹ But in the less congenial arena of midwestern politics, whatever lay evangelical ardor Norwegians felt for the Republican party often came to be neutralized by their remembered class animosities whenever economic issues intruded to activate elections. Norwegian-Americans' adherence to the progressive wing of the Republican party in several areas perhaps indicated desires jointly to express these economic and religious reform impulses within the political format.

To say this, however, by no means is to discount the political influence of religion. On the contrary, although our concern at the moment is to identify sources of division among Republican Norwegians, it is important to keep in mind that the chill of prejudice toward Catholics is evidently what most solidified Norwegian-American votes against the Democratic party.

III

Although Norwegians' anti-Catholicism mainly explains their anti-Democratic voting record, the question persists: Why did the tides of intra-Republican disunity so rend Norwegian settlements? Most departures from the average, I submit, rooted themselves in fresh situations created out of the mix of economic conditions, political arrangements, leadership and social relations in the Upper Midwest. The juncture of political and social settings with each major wave of Norwegian immigrants created different "political generations" among them as each entered American political life.³⁰

The historian Kendrick Babcock arrived at the conviction that Scandinavian party preferences drew in large measure from "the great questions agitating the country at the time they became citizens."³¹ Their initial participation in political affairs became the touchstone for viewing subsequent politics, and it stamped each settlement with a distinctive semi-permanent political identity as it moved through time. As psychological membership in a party lengthened, "party identification" became a political force in its own right, helping Norwegian-American voters to ward off challenges of new events and new parties with increasing ease. Newcomers and the

offspring of earlier arrivals then perpetuated local voting tradition by being apt to accept the politics of the respected Norwegian-Americans who had built the particular settlement.³²

Three clusters of Norwegian communities shared sufficiently distinct circumstances to set them off from one another as products of separate political generations. The first comprised the older settlements that became immersed in the political life of the nation when issues surround the Civil War mainly defined alternatives and alignments. Up until the mid-1850's, as noted, Norwegian immigrants leaned politically toward the Democratic party, owing largely to the nativism of the Whigs, the third-party weakness of the Free-Soil party, and the Democratic party's name and traditional Jacksonian respect for the "common man." But at the same time many Norse immigrants felt uncomfortable about that party's acceptance of slavery's permanence and many disliked associating politically with the Catholic Irish and Germans who crowded into its ranks. So when, after 1854, the largely Protestant Republican party appeared--seeming to promise national unity by avoiding outright abolitionism yet adhering to the antislavery side of the controversy that was pushing all other issues aside--the political situation carried Norwegians into the new party and the ensuing Civil War solidified their votes.³³

A second political generation took form among the Norwegian settlements that established themselves during the years 1865-1880. These new immigrant areas, baptised in political waters alive with vicarious Civil War memories and moral enthusiasm but darkened by vexing postwar problems climaxed by the Panic of 1873, shared a greater ambivalence towards Republicanism. Norwegian-American editors continued to equate Republicanism with patriotism and to keep anti-Democratic feelings alive by publicizing the menace of Catholicism and Irish Catholic victories at the polls.³⁴ (They had not yet begun to capitalize politically on the drinking propensities of the Germans and Irish because temperance sentiment still left Norwegian settlements unaffected.)³⁵ But notwithstanding continuities, Republican/Democratic confrontation no longer seemed so clearly a conflict of slavery/antislavery and Protestant/Catholic forces. Postwar economic problems followed by the Panic of 1873 and its aftermath gave rise both to Democrats espousing anti-monopoly and to Greenbackism. And these economic issues, despite successful preemptive efforts by Republicans to dissipate much discontent, limited Norwegian confidence in Republicanism and brought some falloff in the newer settlements' Republican vote.

The third-generation settlements came into being with the massive wave of immigration that rose about 1880 and ebbed in the later 1890's. Among these settlements, farmers heard increasing complaints about high interest rates for scarce farm capital in a time of financial deflation and declining wheat prices. With wheat farmers hit by overproduction and decreasing earnings, by increasing mortgage uncertainty and decreasing hopes for profits, agrarian concerns loomed ever larger in their political discussions. The Republican party "has outlived itself," the recent immigrant read more frequently in the Norwegian language press, and "what there is left of it does not bear the shadow of a semblance to what it was in the days of Abraham Lincoln."³⁶ Anti-Democratic party feelings still held firm among Norwegians, reinforced by rising temperance sentiment and stiffened by rising anti-Catholic agitation. But the G.O.P., perhaps feeling safe in the Norwegians' aversion to the Democratic party or relying on the unlikely threat of an agrarian third party, or perhaps believing themselves unable to alleviate the farmer's troubles, pursued an unresponsive course--risking greater discontent and the uncertainties of waning Norwegian confidence.

These three perspectives took on impressive political force as Figure 8 makes clear. By 1888, a visible change

DATE OF SETTLEMENT AND
REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL SUPPORT

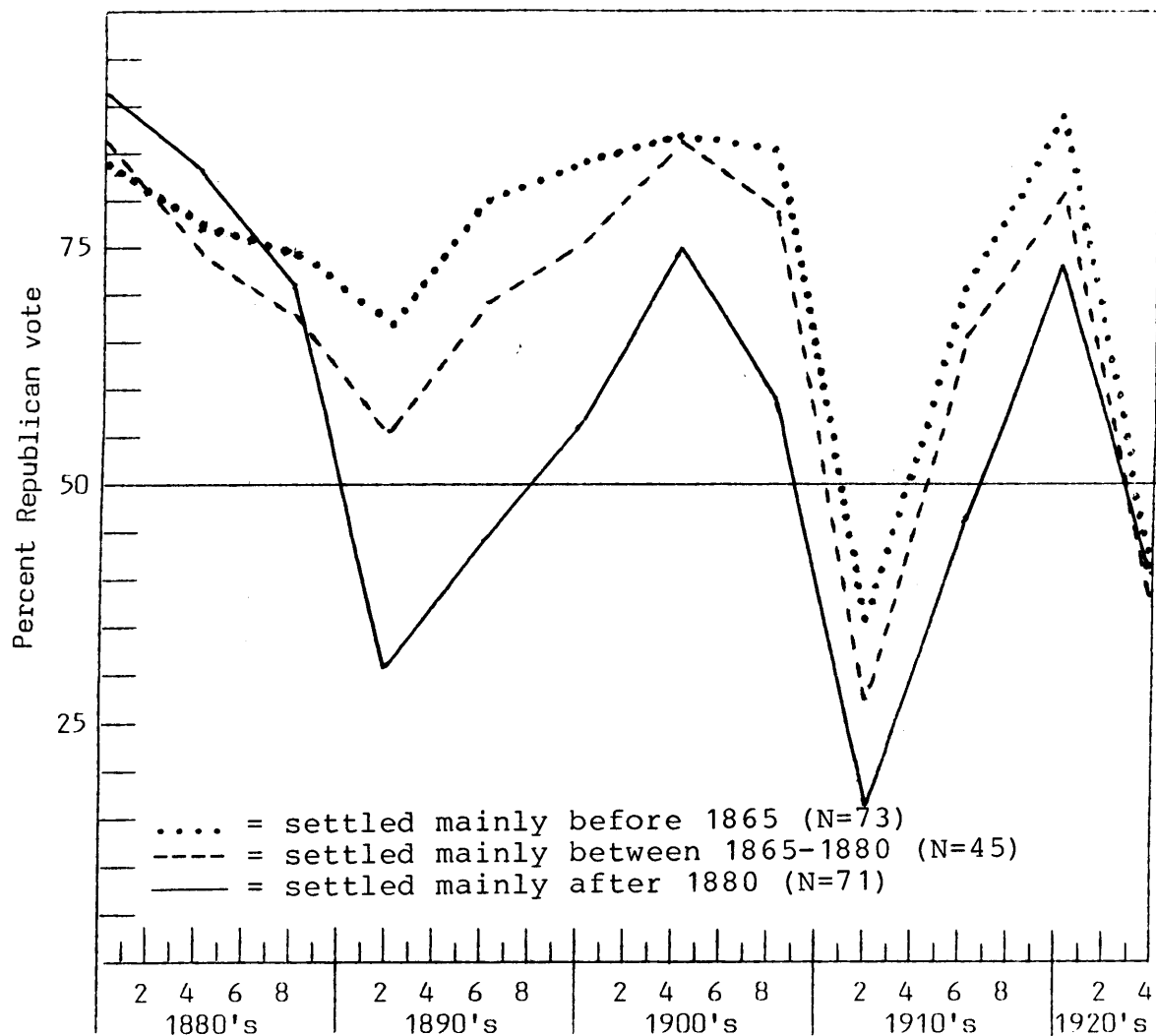


Figure 8. Republican share of presidential vote in Norwegian settlements of the Upper Midwest, grouped according to their estimated period of predominant settlement. Precinct returns are less complete before 1890.

was taking shape in presidential alignments, and by the 1892 election the storm broke. Clusters of like-minded Norwegian settlements brought about a massive enduring realignment. The oldest settlements held steadfast behind the Republican party while Republicanism weakened among the more vulnerable second-generation settlements. Among the most recent settlements, however, Republicans suffered true disaster; votes for G.O.P. candidates fell 20 to 35 percentage points below that of the other two groups. Consequences of the realignment remained visible all the way into the 1920's. The Republican party had lost its singular claim to the Norwegian vote in many areas.

Economic conditions apparently triggered formation of the third political generation. Lower average land values³⁷ prevailed in the recent settlements of Minnesota and Wisconsin, and since economically fragile conditions existed at the very time when economic and class grievances assumed importance, these settlements least psychologically wedded to the Republicans expectedly defected to third parties. Furthermore, in this atmosphere of agricultural hard times and antimonopolist feeling, old-country agrarian animosities retained their political influence.

Conversely, in older Norwegian settlements, the shifting political climate only minimally affected party alignments. With their agriculture by 1890 reasonably

diversified and financially stable, and the Republican identifications firmly rooted in cultural more than economic issues, past agrarian antagonisms from the Old Country had died out, unnourished as a political force. Furthermore, compounding the inertia of long standing Republican loyalties and the absence of any vital issue in these settlements, another reason why few Norwegians felt disposed to turn against their local Republican organizations was suggested by a magazine editor.

"Their leading men," he wrote, "hold numerous county offices and other positions as members of the Republican party, and do not easily make new connections. . . .

Party organizations are the result of time and important events and only time and events can change them."³⁸

IV

Even given the influences noted, most differences in the votes of Norwegian settlements remain unexplained. The date of a settlement's establishment proved a consistent influence, but even this, when combined with the influence of other factors (percent eligible Norwegian voters, percent estimated Lutheran pietist church membership, and percent small town population) statistically account for less than one-half of the total variation in votes. Apparently more elusive factors played

influential roles.³⁹ Not a settlement's percentage of Norwegian-born voters,⁴⁰ not its proportion of urban residents,⁴¹ not the predominant Norwegian regional origins (east or west) of its population⁴² corresponds to any but merely ephemeral differences in the Republican presidential votes of the new settlements.

The segregating effect of state boundaries, however, does appear to have been a major factor in diversifying Norwegian-American voting behavior in the Upper Middle West. This influence is best conceptualized in terms of the differing "political cultures" of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota. Each state expressed a distinctive "pattern of political orientation" that constituted the framework for how issues were raised and resolved. In part this was a matter of systemic or structural differences having to do with political forms for voting and operating government or the function and organization of state parties. In part it may have been ideological, although the politics of all three states in the later period under discussion generally were known as "progressive." In great part it was apparently a matter of differing patterns of leadership recruitment and the differing strengths of various important voter groups.⁴³

In this last respect, it is of special significance that population patterns differed considerably among the

three states. Minnesota, being the youngest and a state on the western periphery of the Middle West, received her primary settlement following the Civil War. Consequently, proportionately more foreign-born persons lived in Minnesota at a later date than in the two older states. In 1910, immigrants or the native children of immigrants made up 72 percent of Minnesota's residents compared to 67 percent in Wisconsin and 41 percent in Iowa. Of perhaps greater importance, various important nationalities distributed themselves quite unevenly over the three states. True enough, the same four groups--German, Norwegian, Swedish and Irish--comprised fully two-thirds of those of foreign birth or parentage in the three states combined. But in Wisconsin 34 percent of the total population was German in background, compared to 19 percent in Minnesota and only 16 percent in Iowa. Conversely, those of Norwegian ethnicity made up 13 percent of Minnesota's people, with only 7 percent in Wisconsin and 3 percent in Iowa. Swedes amounted to a far stronger contingent in Minnesota compared to either Iowa or Wisconsin, while proportionately larger numbers of first- or second-generation Irish lived in Iowa. Political strategies pursued by political parties of each state undoubtedly expressed these contrasts.⁴⁴

Politically, each state rapidly acquired its own dynamic. In a general sense, the influence of state boundaries is apparent in the presidential votes presented in Figure 9. Iowa's Norwegian precincts led those of the other two states in their Republican pluralities, save in 1912, while a somewhat weaker Republicanism prevailed among the settlements of Wisconsin. An average of five to ten percentage points separated the Norwegian-American votes of Iowa and Wisconsin except in the elections of 1912 and 1924, when the spread in their Republican percentages became even greater. These two contests were precisely the times when Wisconsin's Senator LaFollette lost determined bids for the United States presidency, but succeeded in getting Norwegian precincts of his state to follow the course he wanted. By far the greatest difference, however, showed itself in Minnesota's Norwegian settlements. Slipping fast throughout the 1880's, their Republican votes fell sharply with the election of 1892. Thereafter, through World War I, Minnesota's settlements failed to equal the Republican votes given in adjoining older states.

Even within the same generation of settlements, the political influence of state boundaries expressed itself. For example, Norwegian-American townships lying near the point where the borders of Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota

INTERSTATE DIFFERENCES IN
PRESIDENTIAL VOTING

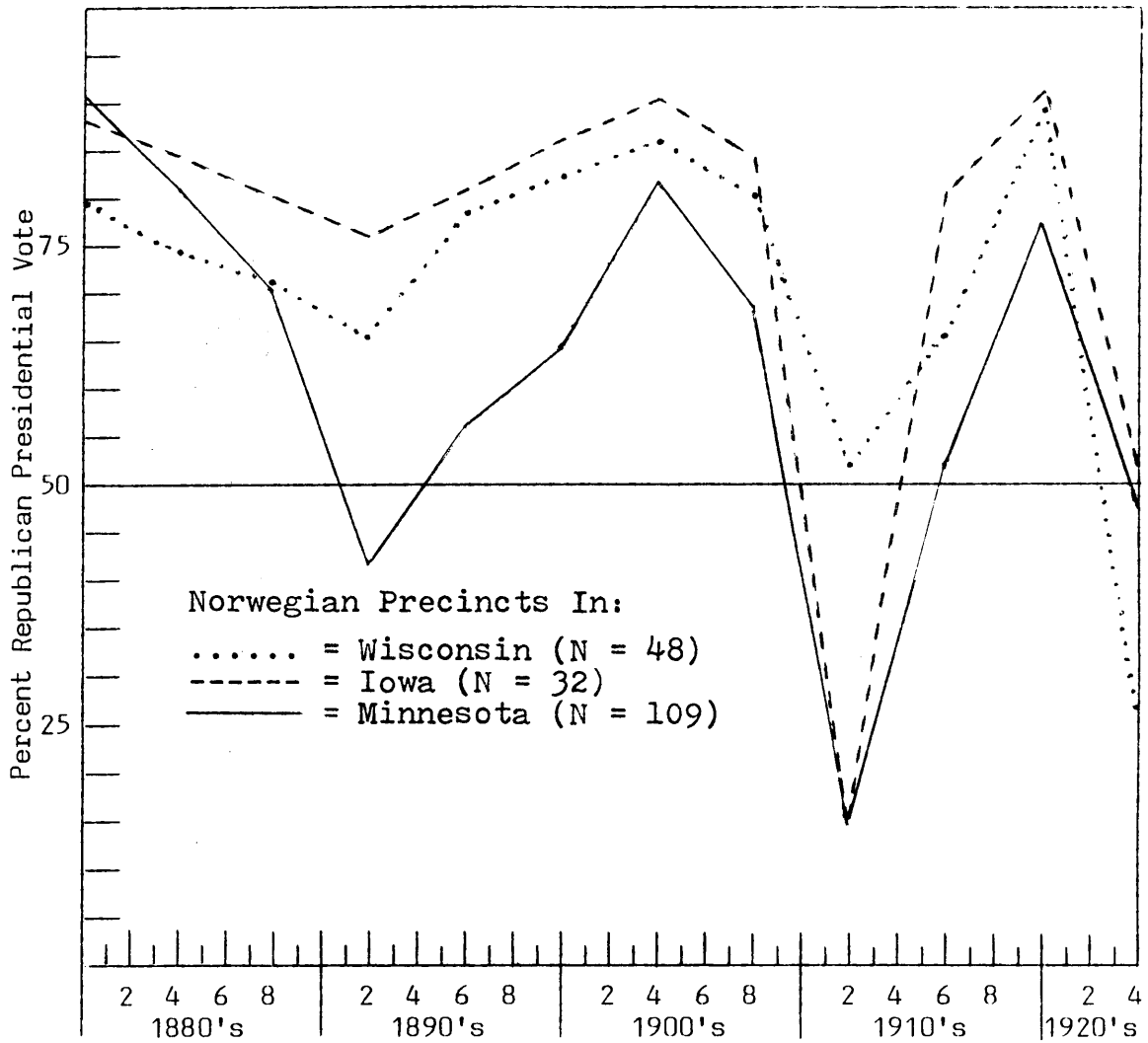


Figure 9. Republican share of presidential vote in Norwegian settlements of three Upper Midwestern states. Precinct returns are less complete before 1890.

join reflected the politics of their respective states rather than that of an immediate "three corners" interstate sub-region (Figure 10). Figure 11 reveals that Populism's appeal in the 1890's influenced these "three corners" settlements differently. Even more striking, two Norwegian favorites, Robert LaFollette and Theodore Roosevelt, failed to attract voters of the different settlements in a uniform manner. During the 1912 election, Roosevelt's unchallenged popularity in northeastern Iowa drew large numbers of votes away from the Republican incumbent, William Howard Taft. But in southwestern Wisconsin and to a slight degree in southeastern Minnesota, Senator LaFollette apparently reduced Norwegian defections from Taft by his personal campaign against Roosevelt. Similar voting divergences between these settlements came in 1924 evidently owing to the mixed effectiveness of LaFollette's third-party organization and of his differing personal appeal within each state.

Moving the analysis from presidential to state elections brings the diversifying influence of state boundaries into even sharper focus. Norwegian-American settlements again could not escape defining their politics other than by the issues, personalities and prevailing conditions that characterized their states. This led Norwegian communities not only to react differently from

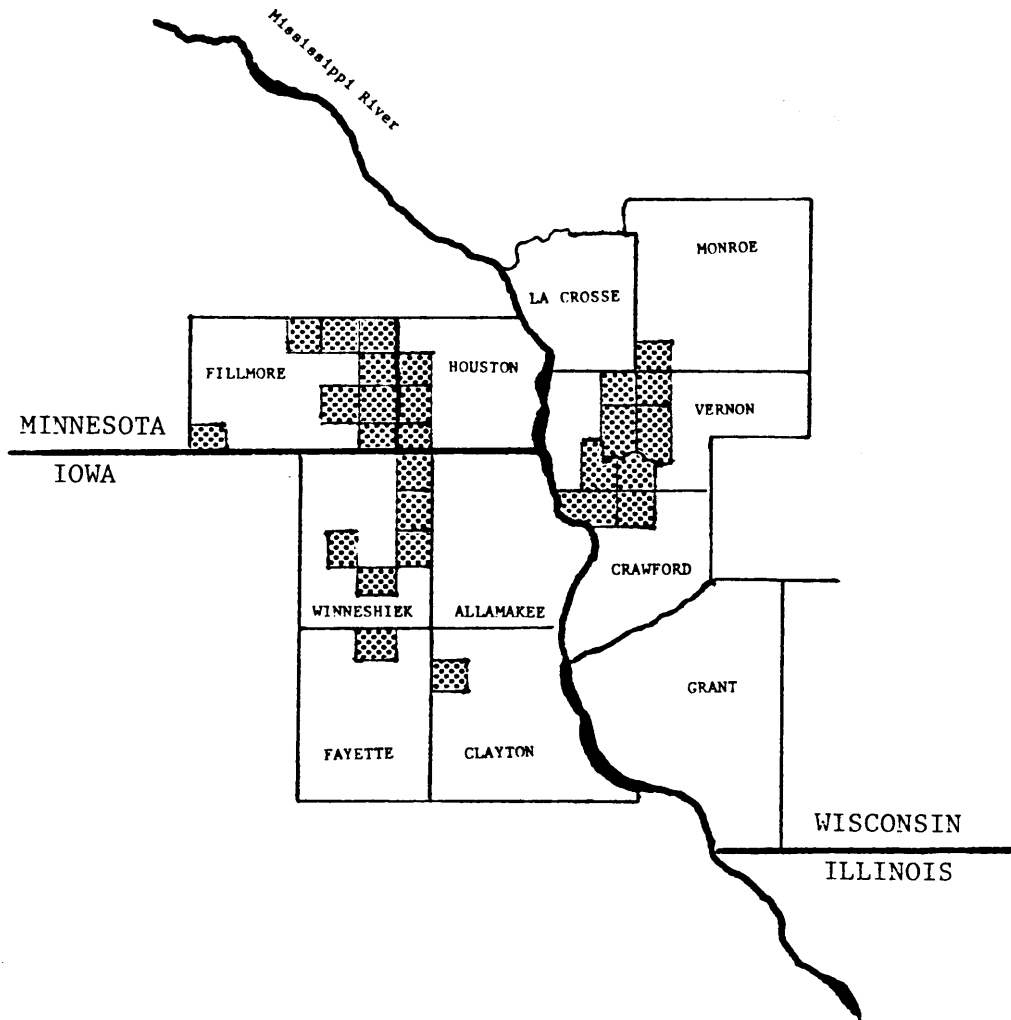


Figure 10. Predominantly Norwegian-American settlements within the "Three Corners" area.

INTERSTATE DIFFERENCES IN PRESIDENTIAL VOTING:
THE "THREE CORNERS" AREA

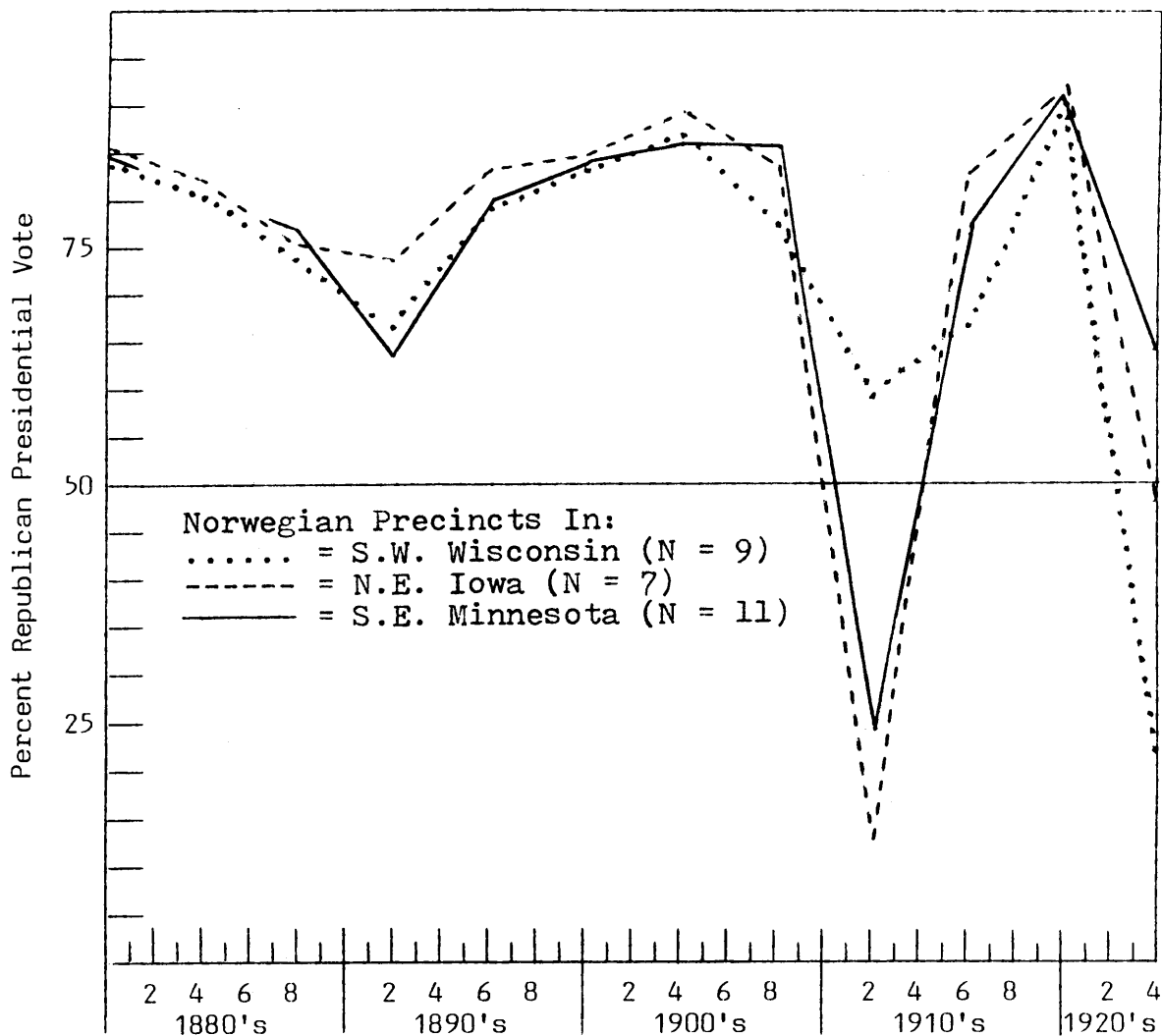


Figure 11. Upper Midwest: Republican share of presidential vote by Norwegian settlements located near one another, but in different states. (Includes precincts in Vernon, Crawford and Monroe counties of Wisconsin; Winnesheik, Fayette and Clayton counties of Iowa; and Fillmore and Houston counties of Minnesota). Election returns unavailable for Fillmore and Houston county precincts in 1884.

state to state, but to do so for different reasons.⁴⁵ The same characteristics of Norwegian settlements divided by state contributed differently to election outcomes. Only Minnesota's Norwegian townships seemed to follow the regional pattern whereby the dates of settlement assumed importance. In Iowa varied Republican votes corresponded closer to the predominance of both the Norwegian nationality within townships and of their synodal affiliations. Votes from Wisconsin's Norwegian townships, on the other hand, bore no consistent relationship to any characteristics examined. Norwegian voting differences, it thus seems clear, grew substantially out of conditions specific to the states in which they were located.

In all three states, the local Republican party managed to perpetuate its dominance, but not without serious challenges from disaffected reform elements.⁴⁶ Closely fought contests unsettled gubernatorial elections in each state between 1865 and 1896. In only half the sixteen contests in Iowa and Minnesota did Republican candidates win 53 percent or more of the vote, while in Wisconsin similar pluralities evaded them more than two-thirds of the time. Republican prospects scarcely improved in fourteen subsequent elections. From 1898 through 1924 party percentages rose in Iowa but declined slightly in Wisconsin and tumbled in Minnesota.⁴⁷

These dissimilarities also characterized the Norwegian-American settlements of each state. Take, for example, the extent to which voters turned out to cast ballots in elections for governor (Figure 12).⁴⁸ In Minnesota, voter interest in Norwegian areas remained stronger than the state average until the end of World War I, while in the Norwegian settlements of Wisconsin voter turnout more closely resembled that of the state's entire electorate. But Iowa's Norwegian townships continuously fell behind statewide turnout levels until after 1908.

The lower level of voter participation from Iowa's Norwegian communities probably derived not only from Norwegians' weaker numerical strength within the state--thereby weakening their collective interest in influencing election outcomes--but also from the discouraging effect of Iowa's election laws, an apparently important structural aspect of its political culture. Under the state's franchise requirements, immigrants could vote only after they officially became American citizens. To be eligible in Minnesota or Wisconsin, on the other hand, an immigrant need only to have taken out his first papers, an act that certified his intention to become an American citizen. If the relatively higher value of the franchise did not actually diminish an immigrant's interest in politics,

INTERSTATE VARIATIONS IN TURNOUT

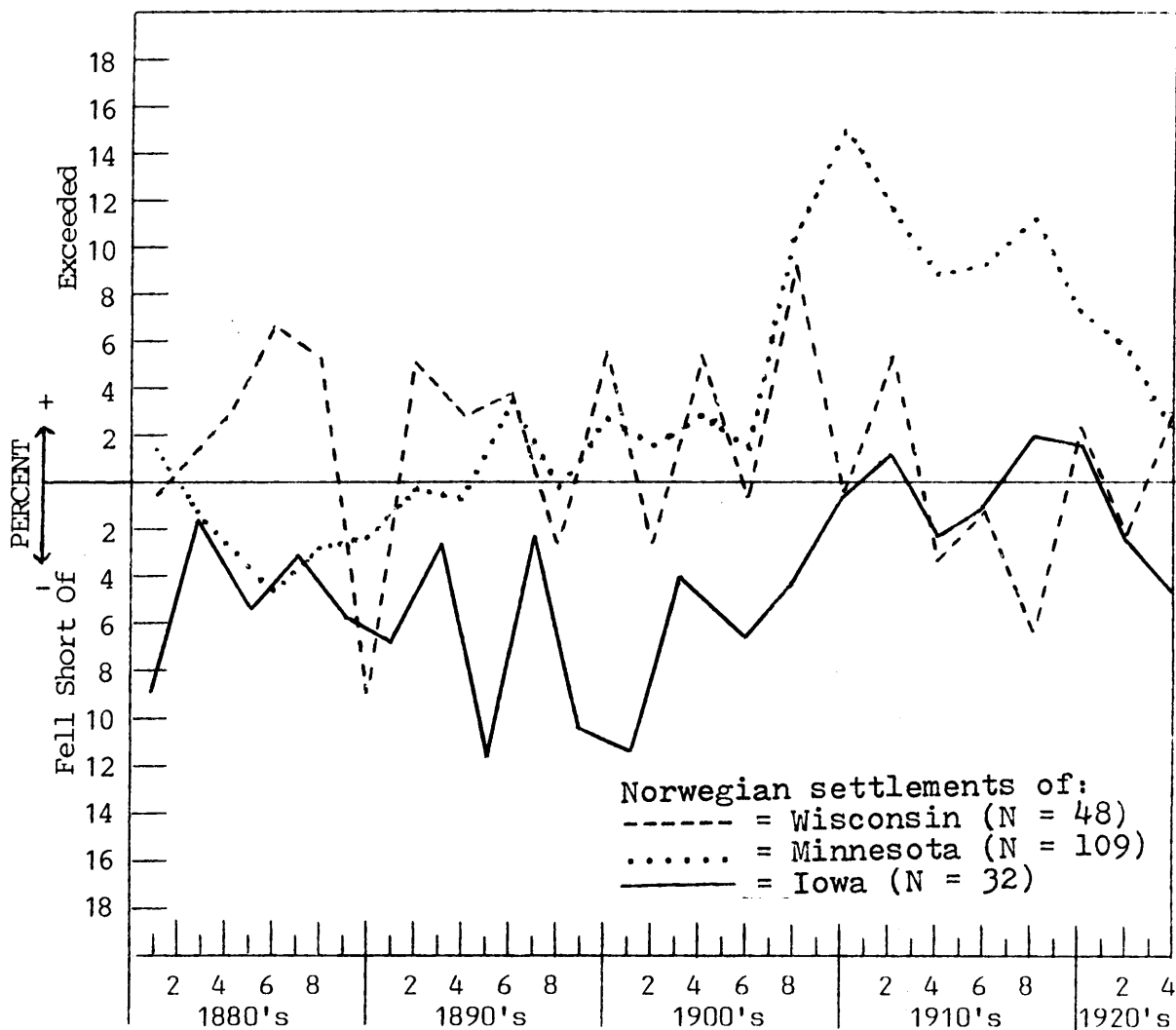


Figure 12. Extent that voter turnout in Norwegian settlements of each state differed from that of the entire state in elections for governor. Precinct returns are less complete before 1890.

Iowa's rules of the game certainly increased chances that election day might catch him ineligible to vote. This reasoning can be easily exaggerated, however. It is instructive to keep in mind that Minnesota's franchise requirements became as restrictive as Iowa's in 1898, although Norwegian turnout in the Land of Many Waters did not abruptly decline in response.

Variety in expressed Republican support further underscored differences. Norwegian-American townships exhibited similar levels of Republican partisanship across state lines only during two periods in the era studied here--in the early 1880's and again in 1916 (Figure 13). The first instance marked the last years of the old post-Civil War coalitions, and the second occurred just before American entry into World War I when a respite in Progressive fervor momentarily calmed Republican factionalism. In addition, the party loyalties of Norwegian settlements only twice moved in something approaching unison, once in 1891-1892 when their votes simultaneously pitched downward under the weight of demoralized Republicanism and third party fervor, and again in 1912 when the Bull Moose candidacy of Theodore Roosevelt evidently proved very attractive to Norwegian-Americans in all three states.

REPUBLICAN GUBERNATORIAL SUPPORT

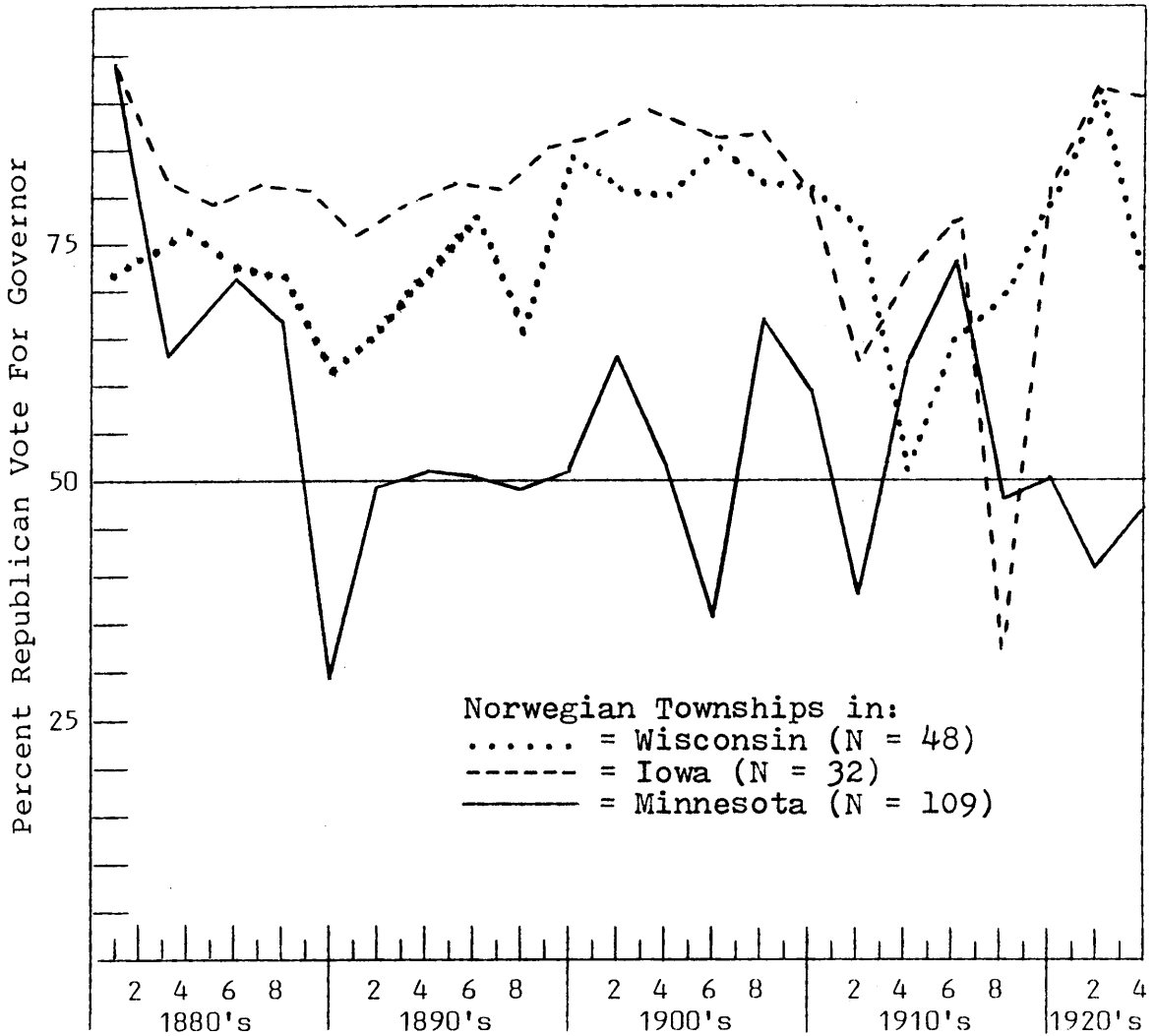


Figure 13. Republican share of vote for governor in Norwegian settlements of three Upper Midwestern states. Precinct returns are less complete before 1890.

Comparing differences in party preferences to differences in turnout levels reveals deeper contrasts. Voters in the Norwegian settlements of Iowa--a comparative minority within the state--proved to be the least interested in voting, although they almost invariably supported Republican candidates. Conversely, voters living in Minnesota's Norwegian-American townships least reliably favored Republican candidates but most regularly showed up at the polls to vote. This would seem to bear out the well-known idea that greater party competition promotes greater voter interest: while political interest languished and Iowa's Norwegian settlements merely clung to traditional loyalties, turbulent third-party competition for Norwegian-American votes in Minnesota enlivened political interest in that state.

Even when Republican strength declined in Upper Midwestern states, however, Democrats rarely became the beneficiaries of Norwegian discontent. Most often the settlements turned instead to assorted third-party causes. Only at three times, when Minnesota's Democratic party ran candidates of Scandinavian background for governor, did Norwegian settlements cast large numbers of votes for the Democracy.⁴⁹ As suggested earlier, Norwegians could not disassociate the Democratic party from Roman Catholicism.

Of course, the uneven Catholic presence across the three states placed political limits on how overt or extensive anti-Catholicism might become--yet another difference in the states' political cultures. Protestant politics that offended Catholics faced tough sledding in Wisconsin, where Catholics comprised a politically hefty 22 percent of the people. Similarly, Minnesota's 19 percent Catholic residents made them a priority to be treated with care. Iowa's Catholics, a meager 9 percent of the people, possessed little such retaliatory strength.⁵⁰ It must be remembered, however, that the Scandinavian constituency for anti-Catholicism also spread itself unevenly across the Upper Midwestern states. In this respect Minnesota stood foremost, with 28 percent of its residents being of Norwegian, Swedish and Danish background, while the three combined Scandinavian groups in Wisconsin and Iowa constituted only 11 and 8 percent respectively.⁵¹

V

Even anti-Catholicism, the central impulse of Norwegian-American political behavior in America, succumbed to the diversifying influence of state boundaries in the Upper Middle West. This can be seen in the region's Norwegian-American encounter with two especially virulent

anti-Catholic movements of the period: the American Protective Association and prohibition reform.

Anti-Catholicism in the 1880's, although disorganized and fragmentary, nonetheless experienced an increased strength in thickly settled portions of the midwest. Catholic churches multiplied and the waning force of Republicanism brought greater power to opposing Irish-American politicians. Organized anti-Catholic efforts steadily took shape, thriving on local political resentments and anxieties. In 1887 the most effective of these organizations, the American Protective Association, drew its first breath in Clinton, Iowa--an urban lumber processing center on the Mississippi River. Here a city election had turned its incumbent mayor out of office. Convinced that the source of his defeat lay in Catholic influence over the votes of Irish lumber mill workers, Henry F. Bowers, a local lawyer, brought the defeated incumbent and several friends together to form a secret political order, the A.P.A. Soon other A.P.A. councils or lodges began to organize in Iowa and in surrounding states. Politically the movement's impact proved uncertain, due largely to its practice of claiming credit for every Protestant candidate either nominated or elected. But its greater willingness than other anti-Catholic societies to enter politics so publicized and spurred its

growth after 1891 as to guarantee that the initials A.P.A. would popularly symbolize all anti-Catholic activities of the era.⁵²

By 1893 leaders of the American Protective Association boasted councils in twenty states, and commentators spoke of the "A.P.A. Belt" stretching from Ohio to Nebraska. Although its numerical strength from state to state remains uncertain, indications are that the movement probably flourished most not in Iowa, but in Michigan, Ohio and Minnesota. In its political effects, the A.P.A. pushed the Republican party into a temporizing position, while the Democrats grasped this opportunity to solidify the Catholic vote by lambasting both the secret order and Republican silence on the issue.⁵³

Some organizations, such as the Junior Order of United American Mechanics, mixed nativism with their anti-Catholicism by excluding all but native-born Protestants from membership. But in areas of large non-Catholic foreign populations, A.P.A. organizers reacted appropriately. "We cannot see," said the Minneapolis editor of the Loyal American and the North, "why the 'Ole Olesons,' if you please, should be discriminated against, simply because they may not all have been born in the United States."⁵⁴ The main deciding principle, such A.P.A. spokesmen insisted, is that Americans owe their allegiance

not to "any foreign potentate, i.e. to the pope," but to "the stars and stripes and the institutions over which they wave."⁵⁵ The preferred ethnic targets of A.P.A. nativists became strictly the Catholic nationalities-- the burgeoning immigrant influx from southern and eastern Europe--"king-ridden, nobility-ridden and priest ridden"-- and, most particularly, the visible Irish-American element within the cities.⁵⁶

Scandinavian-Americans appear to have loomed large within the rank-and-file of the movement. "The Norse or Scandinavian people are hostile to Rome," declared the editor of the Chicago Skandinaven, "because history has taught them to look upon the papacy as the uncompromising enemy of political and religious liberty."⁵⁷ "Catholics always co-operate in politics," concluded another editor in warning that "the chief object of the Catholic church is not the salvation of souls, but the dominion of the world."⁵⁸ Frenzied visions of Catholic political conspiracy flourished in the heated atmosphere of A.P.A. activities. Another Norwegian-American editor exclaimed that "The Church of Rome, that ancient and bitter foe of the church, is plotting and bidding for power in our fair land, [and] is only waiting for the time when she may again manifest the old spirit of the inquisition and massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve, and the butchery of the

first American Protestant colony in Florida."⁵⁹ As for the Irish, perhaps most Norwegian-Americans accepted as unimpeachable doctrine the A.P.A. message that responsible Protestants remained opposed--and legitimately so--only to "Roman Catholicism in politics and the Irish alone carry it there."⁶⁰

Signs of expanding Irish-Catholic control over municipal governments had multiplied during the 1870's and 1880's. Irish mayors for the first time achieved election in Pittsburgh, Boston, Jersey City, Buffalo and Chicago. Furthermore, it was claimed, the number of Irish office holders everywhere far exceeded their proportions of the citizenry.⁶¹ Norwegian-Americans, feeling themselves ethnically superior to Irishmen, whom they looked upon as intemperate, boisterous and industrious only when seeking political office, tended to see only the worst in those they encountered personally. Paul Knaplund, a recent Norwegian arrival at the turn of the century, recalled his first such experience while working as a telephone lineman. "The members of the crew ate their noonday meal at the home of a farmer, referred to by Hans Christ [with whom he had lived as a hired hand] as 'that damn Irishman.' For the first time the newcomer, curious to meet people so unflatteringly described, entered a house where Norwegian was not spoken." A woman of the house noticed that

Knaplund "didn't know how to ask for anything," and consequently "waited on him assiduously," a fact that Knaplund mentioned to Hans Christ later that evening. To this Christ "grudgingly" replied that some might not be so bad, "but, of course, they were all Catholics, and that was enough to damn anyone."⁶²

A.P.A. organizers recognized, and overtly appealed to, this deep-seated sentiment. A typical broadside claimed how "the Scandinavians of Chicago will, at the next election, unite their voting strength with the loyal Americans. With the aid of Chicago's 85,000 A.P.A. boys, they will crush the political life out of the gang of Irish conspirators who have controlled the city for years."⁶³ Meanwhile, Norwegian-American A.P.A. spokesmen such as editor Luth Jaeger of the North reminded readers that "by virtue of their numbers and political activity the Irish-Americans have wedged themselves so firmly into our social fabric that they are treated as a privileged class."⁶⁴ When a Minneapolis spokesman for Irish-Americans retaliated by expressing prejudices of his own against the Norwegians' "ancestry of pirates and freebooters" and "plundering bands," the Loyal American's A.P.A. editor tartly replied that "the Scandinavian countries, unlike Ireland, have never been controlled by an Italian clique. Her sons in America can swear

allegiance to this country without a mental reservation in favor of the pope. Give us the old Viking blood every time."⁶⁵

Only fragmentary clues remain about specific Norwegian-American participation from state to state, and what does exist relates mainly to Minnesota's experience.⁶⁶ One suspects that the state's particular Scandinavian strength may well account for the A.P.A.'s more overt emergence in Minnesota than in Iowa and Wisconsin.

In the Twin Cities, A.P.A. organizers concentrated not on St. Paul, where lived large numbers of Catholics, but in Minneapolis, where Scandinavians constituted over half the foreign-born residents. A.P.A. activity began in earnest in late 1892 when one of the American Protective Association's newspapers, the Loyal American, began operation in Minneapolis. Under editor Edward J. Doyle, the chief Twin Cities organizer, the small four-page paper rapidly swelled beyond a few hundred subscribers to become within a year an eight-page paper boasting an average weekly circulation of 17,550.⁶⁷ Then, indicating the direction of its political appeals, Doyle in early 1894 merged into his publication an eight page local Scandinavian newspaper, the North. Founded in 1889 and known as the other most fiercely anti-Catholic paper in the city, the North represented, according to Doyle, a half-million

Minnesota Protestants by virtue of its being "the only newspaper in the United States devoted to Scandinavian interests, printed in the English language."⁶⁸

Not surprisingly, it was a Norwegian, Ole Byorum, who joined with Edward Doyle to provide the leadership of A.P.A. efforts in Minneapolis. This "foreigner from the regions of the midnight sun," as the antagonistic Irish Standard's editor labeled him, was "the cockolorum of Apaism and . . . grand master of the Minnesota Orangemen to boot. Ole is an undertaker by profession," sneered the editor, though conceding him to be "an intelligent, wide awake fellow" who "does not come under the category of 'ignorant' Scandinavians."⁶⁹

Efforts by Byorum and others combined with the rising tide of anti-Catholicism to make 1893 the year when the greatest number of new A.P.A. councils formed in Minnesota.⁷⁰ Plainly alarmed about the many Scandinavians joining "Know-Nothing secret organizations to keep Irish Catholics from getting any appointive or elective office," the editor of the Irish Standard warned of "retaliation by the Irish in other places if the Scandinavians of Minnesota introduce religion into politics, as some of them are doing already."⁷¹ But A.P.A. enthusiasm remained disproportionately high among Norwegian-Americans as Minnesota entered the election year

of 1894. When editors of the city's leading Republican daily, the Minneapolis Journal, sought to plumb A.P.A. strength in Minneapolis and the State, they reported a state A.P.A. organizer to have said that "ninety per cent of the Scandinavian vote is in the order or in active sympathy with it." The article concluded that A.P.A. councils contained "about 11,000 in Minneapolis and 9,000 in St. Paul," and, of these, "all hands admit that its principal strength is in Scandinavian quarters."⁷²

Although the St. Paul Daily Globe, the Irish Standard and other spokesmen for Democratic and Catholic interests agreed about Scandinavian involvement, they continually discounted the A.P.A. as neither a large nor rapidly growing movement. After all, as Archbishop John Ireland noted, Catholics "cannot be expected to take notice of every fleeting wind that passes over the field of American politics."⁷³ Simultaneously, spokesmen worked to stir indignation and perhaps anti-Scandinavian feeling among Catholics toward instances of A.P.A. activity. They printed reports during the summer of 1894 of Scandinavians abandoning the American Protective Association "like rats," and of a "Knute Nelson lodge" disbanding operations in a northern Minnesota town. These the Loyal American's editor chalked up as pure fabrication put out at "the dictation" of the Romish hierarchy even though indications

pointed to the A.P.A. tide as indeed having crested in Minnesota.⁷⁴

In typical fashion, the A.P.A. tried to throw its weight into the 1894 election campaign by publicizing each candidate's religious affiliation. An "RC" printed behind a person's name identified the opposition, while a "P" signified an approved "Protestant." When the voting results showed large Republican gains, the editor of the Loyal American and the North exulted over the number of Protestant victories it had supposedly engineered. Ultimately, when it turned out that Republican candidates had won all state offices and swept the entire slate of Minneapolis city offices, the editor praised the Mill City as one of the "few" undominated by Catholics and congratulated "the Scandinavian population" as a "Minneapolis safeguard against the encroachments of Romanism."⁷⁵

Despite the bluster, the movement had by 1894 spent itself. Noise and controversy notwithstanding, A.P.A. leaders had little to show for their efforts. Within three months of the close of the campaign, the editor of the Loyal American and the North gave up and moved out of state. The paper ceased publication a few weeks later.⁷⁶

The A.P.A. movement no doubt had drawn into its ranks disproportionate numbers of Norwegian-Americans and other Scandinavians. But apart from helping solidify

Norwegian-American animus against the Democratic party, the movement's impact must be considered negligible. Anti-Catholicism constituted only one influence, albeit a major one, that cannot easily be distinguished from one such as loyalty to the Republican party. When Knute Nelson ran for governor of Minnesota in 1892, who can say whether Norwegian-American voters took cues primarily from Nelson's support by anti-Catholic organizations, his Republican label, his backing from the powerful Grand Army of the Republic, the Irish Catholicism of his Democratic opponent, or by the fact that he was himself of Norwegian birth? Complicating things further, even A.P.A. spokesmen could do little to hold within Republican ranks Norwegian-American farmers caught up in the politics of hard times. In northwestern Minnesota, Scandinavian Populists even sometimes joined Catholic Democrats to overthrow Republican rule. This happened time and again, as we shall see, throughout the 1890's in Otter Tail County, the banner county of the farmers' movement.

The A.P.A. had revealed itself unable to make itself a real power in a heavily Scandinavian state such as Minnesota; it made no apparent headway at all in the political life of Wisconsin and Iowa. Still, anti-Catholicism remained alive among Norwegian-Americans as they faced another issue--prohibition reform. After all,

Norwegian-Americans and other foreign- and native-born Protestants shared the widely held opinion that most of America's saloon keepers were Catholics.

"One of the most serious errors of the Republican party," complained an Iowa Republican editor in 1867, is "the party's exercise of its immense power to maintain and carry the legion of social and moral 'isms' that have not wherewith to maintain themselves at present."⁷⁷ The most powerful of all came to be temperance. It cleaved to the young pre-Civil War Republican party and revived with even greater vigor at the war's end. Although it became a continual embarrassment to many and weakened party strength, influential Republican elements succeeded in keeping the issue alive and in the forefront of reform causes. Norwegians have customarily been numbered among the strongest adherents of prohibition. The principal reason for this attraction may be open to question, but most would cite the influence of Protestant "evangelical" attempts to "improve" the social environment and strains of anti-urban and anti-Catholic feeling brought from the Old Country. These ordinarily overrode whatever irritations Norwegians felt toward doses of nativism that Yankee leaders injected into anti-liquor crusades.

"In all matters relating to temperance and temperance legislation," wrote Babcock in 1914, "the Scandinavian

voters have almost invariably been on the side of restriction of the saloon and the liquor traffic."⁷⁸ Although this exaggerates the point, even a casual reading into the midwestern history of the movement reveals a lengthy list of well known Norwegian anti-saloon leaders. It seems no coincidence that Andrew Volstead, the Norwegian-American Congressman from western Minnesota, sponsored the 1918 Congressional Act to enforce the Eighteenth Amendment.⁷⁹ Also when Prohibitionist party candidates occasionally won legislative office, they often were Norwegian-Americans. Furthermore, Knute Nelson, the first Norwegian-born governor and United States senator from Minnesota, reputedly led the dry forces in the Senate.⁸⁰ Hundreds of temperance societies formed within Norwegian church congregations to stamp out the evil of alcohol and the institutional means that supported it. At the same time, temperance organizations unconnected with the church (the Good Templars and Women's Christian Temperance Union, for example) attracted many Norwegians.⁸¹

Temperance sentiment had not always ranked high among Norwegian-Americans. Until the early 1870's, the Norwegian-American press largely regarded "the temperance agitation," in the words of historian Arlow Andersen, as "a minor movement aiming at an impossible solution."⁸² Perhaps reflecting the prevailing Lutheran Church idea that

man's depravity held little hope for movements promising greater perfectibility of society, it took a while for most Norwegians to regard temperance as a legal and legislative question beyond simply a personal moral and social problem. "A dozen years ago," wrote one observer of Minneapolis' Scandinavian temperance organizations in 1892, "there was no temperance movement worthy of the name." But now he could report that "although a large proportion of the liquor sold in this city is retailed by Scandinavian hands and poured down Scandinavian throats, still a decided and ever growing current has been running in the opposite direction over the last ten years."⁸³ Once feeling shifted, Norwegian abstinence organizations rapidly proliferated and voters backed local option, county option and state prohibition measures. Of the major statewide referendums submitted to midwestern voters on prohibition or its enforcement (Iowa, 1882 and 1917; Minnesota, 1918; and Wisconsin, 1920), repeatedly the returns from Norwegian localities displayed clear majorities in their favor.

This expressed enthusiasm can be exaggerated, however. Temperance thinking did not perfectly correlate with being Norwegian and interest in such matters by Norwegians varied from one state to the next. Prohibition party candidates attracted few votes in Norwegian-American

settlements. Prohibition referenda fared better but did not escape opposition. Fully 80 percent of the ballots cast in Iowa's heavily Norwegian townships favored an 1882 prohibition referendum, but by the time of the 1917 referendum this majority had slipped to 63 percent. In Minnesota, Norwegian-American settlements gave 67 percent of their votes for a similar measure in 1918 while Norwegian areas of Wisconsin mustered but 61 percent in favor of the state's Prohibition Enforcement Act of 1920. A few individual townships, in fact, cast majorities in the opposite direction. In only two of Iowa's twenty-four Norwegian-American townships did most voters oppose the referendum in 1882, but this had by 1917 grown to six out of twenty-six townships. The 1918 prohibition referendum in Minnesota found majority votes cast against it in five of 109 Norwegian-American precincts, while in Wisconsin fully eight of the forty-eight Norwegian-American precincts opposed prohibition enforcement. This occurred often enough to make the relationship worth looking at.

When Norwegian-Americans divided on the prohibition issue, at least two sources contributed to it. First, ambivalence in Old Country viewpoints toward drinking revealed Norwegian views to be evolving rather than fixed. Second, ethno-religious issues stirred politics in Iowa more than in Minnesota and Wisconsin, which makes the

intervening affect of state political culture a factor not to be discounted.

Enthusiasm in Norway for temperance had developed slowly. Despite widely reported public drunkenness that followed removal in 1816 of restrictions on the private right to distill liquor, rural farmers for some time greeted temperance agitation with indifference. In part this derived from their lingering resentment against towns that had for so long held exclusive distilling privileges.⁸⁴ Even as the per capital consumption of alcohol soared to its peak in 1833, farmer legislators continued to guard jealously the farmer's right to distill his strong potato spirits. But by 1845 a growing temperance movement among evangelical activists of the professional upper classes convinced sufficient legislators that the alarming use of alcohol should be arrested.⁸⁵ The parliament outlawed small stills and required distillers to sell either to authorized inns or directly to the customer. Within a decade, brandy consumption had been cut in half and less than fifty of the more than 1,300 earlier distilleries remained in business.⁸⁶ Yet, alcohol use persisted in Norway. Among many rural dwellers, traditional social drinking continued to be an accepted part of wedding and baptism celebrations and, occasionally, at funerals.⁸⁷

Weaker temperance feeling among townsmen further divided Norwegian opinion. As in urban areas of the United States, temperance advocates in Norway had to concede in 1891 that the liquor traffic "is entrenched in the cities, from which, apparently, it cannot be dislodged without making a much harder battle than any yet waged. At present only one city, Haugesund (population 5,000), absolutely prohibits all intoxicants."⁸⁸ As for Kristiania, only with the cholera scare of 1892 did greater numbers of people evidently abandon "the usual Sunday drinking and card playing" for church.⁸⁹

A third influence--paralleling urban-rural differences--had to do with an attenuated temperance sentiment within the official clergy. Cultured and academically educated, the government-appointed clergy persisted in their acceptance of convivial drinking despite challenge from evangelical and "Free Church" temperance elements.⁹⁰ Even when prohibition sentiment advanced to a point in which a 1919 referendum made permanent the temporary wartime ban on alcohol, national prohibition did not last long in Norway. Outright public evasion, lax enforcement, and fear for the country's fish markets in the wine lands of southern Europe led to the experiment's abandonment in 1926 by an unenthusiastic parliament.⁹¹

Neither did prohibitionism in America entirely absorb the Norwegian personality. As Theodore Blegen expresses the ambivalence, "a protest against the use of liquor took form and grew in volume" but "on the part of many there appears to have been a friendly tolerance of liquors."⁹² Throughout Ole Rølvaag's novels, we see Norwegian-Americans who, with scant censure, drink, wrestle, dance and smoke. Rølvaag, who weakly shared, though felt sympathy toward, the somber pietism embraced by numerous countrymen, saw excessive drinking as being less an indictment of liquor than a symptom of strain on the disillusioned Norwegian immigrant.⁹³ He, along with most others before temperance feeling increasingly caught hold in the 1880's, evidently approved of the custom of liquor use for special occasions. In his trilogy, a trip by the menfolk to a distant town for supplies brings numerous "orders" for "Sunday bottles" to be filled, the occasion of which is celebrated with several "rounds of treats." And when the barn is built on Beret Holm's farm, few avoid enjoying the Norwegian custom of making the barn "leak-proof" by giving the ridgepole "a little soaking during the shingling."⁹⁴ This tolerance of drinking apparently extended more to Norwegian-American farming than small town areas (Table 1). When the legislatures of Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin proposed anti-liquor

Table 1

Percent Vote Cast for Anti-Liquor Referendums
of Upper Midwestern States By Predominantly
Norwegian Townships and Villages^a

Townships	Iowa 1882 & 1917	Minnesota 1918	Wisconsin 1920
Rural	64.1	66.0	57.6
Urban (18 percent or more small town/ village residents, 1910)	72.8	68.9	65.3

^aVoting returns were available for townships in each state as follows: Iowa, 1882 (16 rural; 8 urban); Iowa, 1917 (18 rural, 8 urban); Minnesota, 1918 (83 rural, 25 urban); Wisconsin, 1920 (34 rural, 14 urban).

referenda for the people to approve or reject, all attracted less support from the most rural Norwegian townships.

But apart from an Old Country ambivalence toward liquor and the tendency for rural Norwegian-American settlements to differ from their small town bretheren, political conditions specific to each state could amplify temperance divisiveness among Norwegians. Theoretically the predominant pietist or liturgical orientation of a Norwegian-American locality might incline its voters for or against prohibition. But voters evidently balanced feelings on this issue against those on other issues and of their past party loyalties rooted in yet other issues. Even within liturgical Norwegian Synod settlements, where pastors might oppose state restrictions on convivial drinking as being hopeless attempts to perfect society and contrary to practices familiar in Norway, they still might be apt to suppress their opinions out of traditional deference to official authority and continue to urge a solid Republican vote as akin to religious duty.⁹⁵ Therefore, for differing pietist and liturgical views to become politically alive and erode solid Republican majorities, the prohibition question had to absorb state politics that pastors focused on this issue over their loyalty to party on other grounds.

Because the Republican party less daringly promoted prohibition in states where its opponents were strong, this weakened the issue's capacity to divide Norwegian-Americans in Wisconsin and Minnesota. The reason for party reluctance is that, whereas A.P.A. anti-Catholicism had arrayed Protestants against Catholics, prohibitionism placed Protestants against both Catholics and German Lutherans. Catholics most predominated in Wisconsin, followed by Minnesota and Iowa. And, if membership in the Synodical Conference (led by the Missouri Synod) is taken as an index of liturgical German Lutheran strength, we find also that in 1906 over two-and-one-half times as many German Lutherans lived in Wisconsin than in Minnesota and over twice as many lived in Minnesota than in Iowa.⁹⁶ Consequently, of four statewide prohibition referenda conducted between 1880 and 1924 in the three states, it is not surprising that only in Iowa, which adopted restrictive forms of liquor legislation at various moments throughout the entire era, did the issue split Norwegian settlements of pietist and liturgical Lutheran orientation (Table 2).⁹⁷

In fact, Iowa proved to be the only state of the three where differing Lutheran affiliations seem to have loosened the Republican grip on Norwegian-Americans (Figure 14).⁹⁸ The prohibition issue dominated Iowa politics from the 1870's on into the 1890's and beyond.

Table 2

Percent Votes of Norwegian Settlements for
Statewide Prohibition Referenda 1880-1920,
By Synodal Doctrine^a

Referenda	Pietist	Liturgical
	Percent	Percent
1. Iowa, 1882	85.0	66.9
2. Iowa, 1917	67.0	57.0
3. Minnesota, 1918	68.0	65.6
4. Wisconsin, 1920	62.3	60.5

^aThe classification "Pietist" encompasses settlements where the predominant Lutheran church affiliation was with Hauge's Synod, United Lutheran Church or Lutheran Free Church. The "Liturgical" classification includes settlements with predominantly Norwegian Synod congregations and those of mixed pietist and Norwegian Synod affiliations. Refer Appendix A for description of method used to classify townships. Voting returns were available for townships in each state as follows: Iowa, 1882 (15 pietist, 9 liturgical); Iowa, 1917 (15 pietist, 11 liturgical); Minnesota, 1918 (65 pietist, 43 liturgical) Wisconsin, 1920 (20 pietist, 28 liturgical).

SYNODAL AFFILIATIONS AND INTRA-STATE VOTING

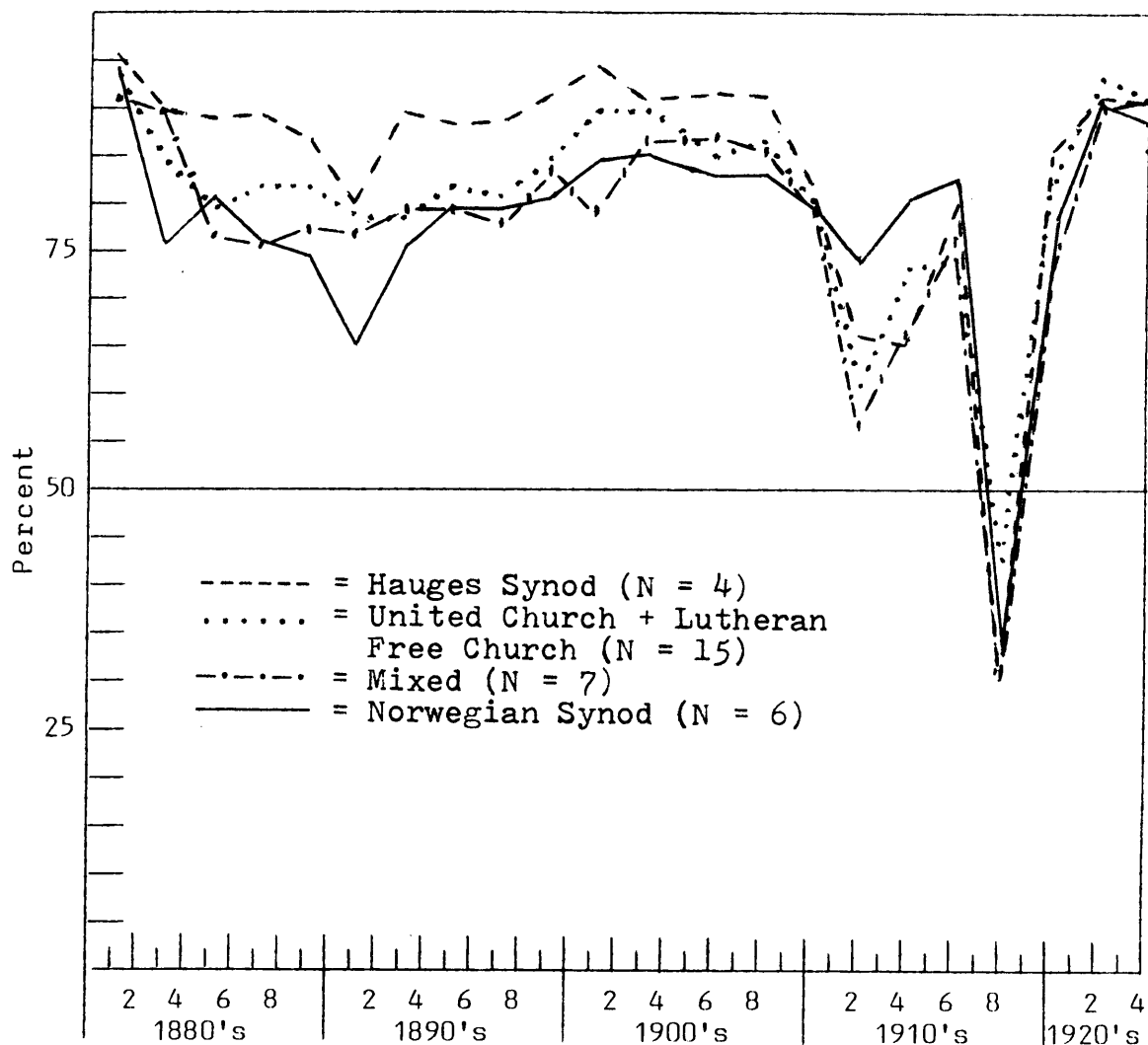


Figure 14. Republican share of votes for governor in Iowa's Norwegian settlements according to their predominant Norwegian Lutheran church affiliations as of 1915. The doctrinal orientation of each precinct is classified as to whether an estimated one-half or more of its church members belonged to a single Norwegian synod. Others are included in the "mixed" category. Precinct returns are less complete for 1920 and before 1890.

And because this corresponded to the period when many Norwegian settlements fashioned their party alignments, constant clashes over prohibition widened political differences between Norwegian pietist and liturgical settlements. As the Republican party moved toward the dry camp, it steadily lost favor in the less evangelical communities.

The sequence of political events began when the Republicans endorsed local option laws in the late 1870's and, shortly thereafter (1882-1885) openly advocated prohibition legislation. But when Governor William Larrabee began vigorously to enforce these laws (1886-1889), mounting opposition combined with waning dry enthusiasm to help elect Democrat Horace Boise to the statehouse. After Boise secured re-election in 1891, the Republican party professionals decided they had had enough. Declaring that prohibition would be no test of Republicanism, they successfully purged the dries from the party machinery and regained control over state offices in 1893, partly through advocating a return to a local option form of liquor legislation.⁹⁹

Given this context, Norwegian areas with predominantly pietist congregations (that is, those of the Hauge Synod and United Church) generally advocated prohibition while less evangelical Norwegian Synod townships accepted

the legislation with greater reluctance. Winneshiek County, a center of Norwegian Synod influence, illustrated these conflicting views. When the prohibitory law came up for a vote in 1882, Republican party support and voter turnout dwindled in three Norwegian Synod townships compared to their 1881 vote for governor.¹⁰⁰ While Madison, Glenwood and Pleasant townships all reacted adversely to prohibition agitation, only one liturgical precinct, Highland Township, exhibited the kind of increased turnout and high support for the amendment that characterized most pietist townships.¹⁰¹

The slumping Republican vote extended to other Norwegian Synod areas. We witness it in Eden and Logan townships of Winnebago County. Organized in the mid-1880's, their Republican percentages declined for the next several elections. Pietist townships, on the other hand, adhered strongly to Republican candidates, although occasionally they, too, displayed some inconsistency. Linden Township in Winnebago County is a case in point. Laurence M. Larson, writing of his early life at Linden, recalled that his father spoke out vigorously for prohibition in 1882 and "it was a matter of real gratification to him that every vote in our township was cast for the amendment."¹⁰² Nevertheless, Linden subsequently dropped steadily in its Republicanism until, by 1891, the past

decade had seen a 43 percentage point decline. Yet, despite some disunity within pietist and liturgical camps, the influence in Iowa of Norwegian-American synodal affiliations cannot be minimized.¹⁰³

Earlier we have seen how national and regional aspects of the political situation had governed party preferences, resulting in a broad Norwegian-American commitment to the Republican party throughout the Upper Midwest and in its erosion among succeeding generations of settlers. But I have also suggested that a good share of the varied Norwegian-American vote stemmed from different issues, personalities and social and economic circumstances within each particular state. These channeled, undercut, or heightened shared Norwegian affinities--bringing out different political qualities among the settlements of each state. Although regional and state conditions accounted for differences, many if not most owed themselves to local influences. The chapters that follow attempt to grasp this dimension, with special attention being given to uneven political relations at county and township levels.

NOTES

¹The shaping influence of the Civil War is discussed in Leon D. Epstein, Politics in Wisconsin (Madison, 1958), pp. 35-36. The relative importance of translocal politics to local ethnocultural conflict is emphasized in Walter Dean Burnham's review essay, "Quantitative History: Beyond the Correlation Coefficient," Historical Methods Newsletter, IV (1971), 63-64.

²Theodore C. Blegen, Norwegian Migration To America: The American Transition (Northfield, Minn., 1940), II, 297-298.

³*Ibid.*, p. 435.

⁴Leola N. Bergmann, "Norwegians in Iowa," Palimpsest, XL (1959), 362.

⁵Banned from Norway since Reformation times, not until 1845 were Catholics allowed to establish a congregation in Christiania. Ronald G. Popperwell, Norway (New York, 1972), p. 250n. The political force of one's party preferences oriented in opposition to ethnic or religious groups supporting other parties is addressed in several studies. See Samuel P. Hays, "Political Parties and the Community-Society Continuum," ed. William Nisbet Chambers and Walter Dean Burnham, The American Party Systems (New York, 1967), pp. 158-159; Lee Benson, The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case (Princeton, 1961), pp. 184, 278-281, 301, 303; Michael F. Holt, Forging a Majority: The Formation of the Republican Party in Pittsburgh, 1848-1860 (New Haven, 1969), p. 218; Richard L. McCormick, "Ethno-Cultural Interpretations of Nineteenth-Century American Voting Behavior," Political Science Quarterly, LXXXIX (1974), 359-361.

⁶Ole E. Rølvaag, Peder Victorious, trans. Nora O. Solum and O. E. Rolvaag (New York, 1929), pp. 113-114.

⁷Ole E. Rølvaag, Their Fathers' God, trans. Trygve M. Ager (New York, 1931), p. 20.

⁸Ibid., pp. 325, 329.

⁹Kendric C. Babcock, "The Scandinavians in the Northwest," Forum, XIV (1892), 108.

¹⁰Kendric Charles Babcock, The Scandinavian Element in the United States (Urbana, Ill., 1914), p. 114; see also Paul Knaplund, Moorings Old and New: Entries in an Immigrant's Log (Madison, 1963), pp. 61, 159, 221; Theodore C. Blegen, Minnesota: A History of the State (Minneapolis, 1963), p. 217; John H. Fenton, Midwest Politics (New York, 1966), pp. 76-77; Roger Wyman, "Voting Behavior in the Progressive Era: Wisconsin as a Case Study" (doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1970), pp. 595, 611-612; George H. Mayer, The Political Career of Floyd B. Olson (Minneapolis, 1951), p. 13; Arthur Naftalin, "A History of the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota" (doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1948), p. 73.

¹¹Kendric Charles Babcock, "The Scandinavian Contingent," Atlantic Monthly, LXXVII (1896), 663.

¹²Kendric C. Babcock, "The Scandinavian Contingent," Atlantic Monthly, LXXVII (1896), 663, makes the point that "The distrust of the Irish, which sometimes takes active form, is at bottom religious, and not racial." This view he later repeats in his book, The Scandinavian Element in the United States (Urbana, Ill., 1914), p. 114.

¹³H. H. Boyesen, "The Scandinavian in the United States," North American Review, CLV (1892), 528.

¹⁴"The Scandinavians and the Presidential Nominations," Scandinavia, II (1883), 25.

¹⁵Chicago (Ill.) Skandinaven, Apr. 22, 1914, as quoted in Herbert F. Margulies, "Anti-Catholicism in Wisconsin Politics, 1914-1920," Mid-America XLIV (1962), 52.

¹⁶To help identify sources of these differences, I compiled six quantitative indicators of circumstances that might have influenced divisions among Norwegian-American precincts. The characteristics related to a precinct's predominant Lutheran affiliation, estimated time of principle settlement, geographic location, nationality predominance, region of origin in Norway, and proportion of Norwegian-Americans in small towns. To the extent that these indicators corresponded or failed to correspond to

differences in voting, their importance has been stressed or called into question in this study. I do not rest my interpretation simply on quantifiable relationships, however, as the final three chapters show. But where possible I have tried to capitalize on clues that they may offer.

¹⁷See especially Kleppner, Cross of Culture, pp. 69-91; Jensen, Winning of the Midwest, pp. 58-88.

¹⁸For this discussion I relied on the following: Clifford Nelson and Eugene Fevold, The Lutheran Church Among Norwegian-Americans, Volume I, 1825-1890 (Minneapolis, 1960), pp. 13-23, 123-270; Einar Haugen, The Norwegians in America (New York, 1967), pp. 20-22; Leola N. Bergmann, Americans From Norway (New York, 1950), pp. 145-162; Blegen, Norwegian Migration: The American Transition, pp. 100-103, 131-174; J. T. Flint, "State, Church and Laity in Norwegian Society" (doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1957); Norlie, Norwegian People in America, pp. 189-190.

¹⁹Norlie, Norwegian People in America, pp. 190-191.

²⁰Rølvaag, Peder Victorious, p. 65.

²¹Ibid., p. 66.

²²Bergmann, Americans From Norway, pp. 147-148.

²³Peter A. Munch, "Social Class and Acculturation," The Strange American Way (Carbondale, Ill., 1970), pp. 196-197. Also see Blegen, Norwegian Migration: The American Transition, pp. 172-173.

²⁴Kleppner, Cross of Culture, p. 71.

²⁵Some possibility for error exists here because few of the townships I examined were entirely of a "single church" character. My classifications are based on an estimated fifty percent or more of a locality's communicants belonging to a single synod as of 1915, and statistical correlations are based on the estimated percent of each synod's members in a township. Refer Appendix B for details.

²⁶Most of the predominantly Haugean precincts I identified turned out to be in Wisconsin where Robert LaFollette, feeling that Theodore Roosevelt had stolen the

presidential nomination from him, successfully turned the votes of Norwegian settlements to Taft.

²⁷Bleggen, Norwegian Migration: The American Transition, pp. 170-171; Eugene L. Fevold, "The Norwegian Immigrant and His Church," Norwegian-American Studies, Volume 23, ed. Kenneth Bjork (Northfield, Minn., 1967), p. 10; Kleppner, Cross of Culture, pp. 85-86. Lower correlations between Republican votes and Lutheran Synod affiliations may also be partly due to the invariable margin of error involved in deriving estimates of each Synod in the settlements and also to the numerous immigrants who did not join any church.

²⁸Before the 1860's, narrow provincialism as well as regional and local cleavages continued to politically submerge feelings of resentment by the Norwegian peasantry against the alien official classes. The religious revival of Hans Nielson Hauge (1771-1824) had first whetted agrarian aspirations during the years surrounding the turn of the nineteenth century. The latent class antagonism and religious pietism of the country people gave infectious support to Hauge when he sharply attacked the professional competence and exclusive authority of the official pastorate. This gradually broadened into what historian Theodore Bleggen has called a "struggle of the common people against the aristocracy" in which "the laity tended to be on one side, the state-church on the other." (Bleggen, Norwegian Migration: The American Transition, p. 101; see also Karen Larsen, A History of Norway (New York, 1948), p. 358.) Whether driven by the Hauge agrarianism of western Norway, the social strains of a pronounced social hierarchy in eastern Norway, or the resentments of fishermen dependent on those who controlled port facilities in the North, commoners understood the connection between lay evangelical movements and the party struggles between the Left and Right. The former wanted reforms and the latter opposed them. The social roots of ecclesiastical division are well brought out in Munch, "Social Class and Acculturation," pp. 196-211. See also Nelson and Fevold, The Lutheran Church, pp. 6-23; Peter A. Munch, A Study of Cultural Change: Rural-Urban Conflicts (Oslo, 1956), pp. 41-43; B. J. Hovde, The Scandinavian Countries, 1720-1865 (Boston, 1943), II, 556-557; Halvdan Koht, "Free Men Build Their Society," The Voice of Norway (New York, 1944), pp. 58-60; Bleggen, Norwegian Migration to America, 1825-1860 (Northfield, Minn., 1931), pp. 163, 167.

²⁹The conflict in Norway assumed the form, as Munch states it, of "a reluctantly retreating professional elite with a strong sense of responsibility for the preservation of the higher spiritual values in life, both religious and cultural; and a self-asserting peasantry in search of freedom." (Munch, "Social Class and Acculturation," p. 203.) In the Upper Midwest, the conservative Norwegian Synod pastors pursued their sense of professional class obligation by seeking to preserve things Norwegian against the sweeping waves of Americanism. Egalitarian pietists, conversely, vigorously attacked the minister's wearing of the clerical garb, their rituals, their scholastic training and other cultural symbols reminiscent of the deep social differences that had prevailed in Norway. Munch, "Social Class and Acculturation," p. 205; Laurence M. Larson, The Changing West and Other Essays (Northfield, Minn., 1937), pp. 154-155.

³⁰A political generation is defined as a conger of persons whose exposure to the same prevailing events at a formative time in their development leads them to share a political outlook significantly different from earlier and later groups who shared different experiences. Of the many studies of generations that are available, I found the following to be particularly useful: Norman B. Ryder, "The Cohort as a Concept in the Study of Social Change," American Sociological Review, XXX (1965), 843-861; Alan B. Spitzer, "The Historical Problem of Generations," American Historical Review, LXXVIII (1973), 1353-1385; Seymour M. Lipset, Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Allen H. Barton, and Juan Linz, "The Psychology of Voting: An Analysis of Political Behavior," Handbook of Social Psychology, ed. Gardner Lindzey (Cambridge, 1954), pp. 1147-1148; Maurice Zeitlin, "Political Generations in the Cuban Working Class," American Journal of Sociology, LXXI (1966), 493-508; Philip E. Converse, "Of Time and Partisan Stability," Comparative Political Studies, II (1969), 139-144; Daniel J. Elazer, The Generational Rhythm of American Politics (Philadelphia, 1976).

³¹Babcock, Scandinavian Element in the United States, p. 157.

³²Distinct political generations derived from the juncture of such large collective immediate problems as war, depression, prosperity, tensions of an immigrant society, the prevailing political climate, and the immigrants' transplanted attitudes.

³³On Norwegian party alignments of the 1840's and 1850's, see Arlow William Andersen, The Immigrant Takes His Stand: The Norwegian-American Press and Public Affairs, 1847-1872 (Northfield, Minn., 1953), chaps. ii, iv.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 54, 118, 140, 147.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 121, 122, 135, 155.

³⁶Minneapolis (Minn.) Normanna, quoted in Minneapolis (Minn.) The North, Dec. 3, 1890.

³⁷Pearson Product Moment correlations were +.80 for Minnesota and +.68 for Wisconsin. Comparable precinct level data was unavailable for Iowa's average land values.

³⁸"The Scandinavians and the Presidential Nominations," Scandinavia, I (1884), 277-278.

³⁹Using the computer program, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), I examined by regression analysis the extent (R^2) that four social indicators accounted for variance in Republican votes of upper midwestern Norwegian settlements. Of them, the estimated percent of Lutheran membership in pietist churches (Hauges Synod, United Lutheran Church, Lutheran Free Church) explained never more than four percent of the variation in votes while percent small town population remained a negligible influence until 1924 when it accounted for eight percent of differences in the vote. Percent eligible Norwegian voters accounted for fourteen percent of the variation in the 1880 vote, but then dropped to almost nothing as an explanatory influence. Only the time when Norwegian settlements became established (expressed as the estimated average years of residence in a settlement as of 1895) consistently accounted for from eleven to forty-five percent of the variation in votes.

⁴⁰Norwegian communities with very high Norwegian concentrations (81.7 percent or greater) generally voted little differently than did those containing lesser concentrations (50.0 to 68.5 percent). Only during the 1880's, when post-Civil War Republicanism still unified Norwegians, did 10 percentage points separate the moderately concentrated Norwegian settlements from those with very high proportions of Norwegian voters. Thereafter, other issues intruded to make the Norwegian vote less predictable. It took a direct outside threat to get them to vote strictly as Norwegians.

⁴¹With the exception of 1924, never more than five percentage points separated the average Republican votes of farm precincts (i.e., 16.7 percent or less non-farm precincts (i.e., 35.0 percent or more non-farm population).

⁴²I wondered if old country socio-cultural divisions between western Norway and eastern Norway might have carried over to influence Norwegian-American political behavior. Geographic isolation over the centuries had brought about distinguishable differences in dialect, religious inclination and social class structure. Yet, no carryover effect on Norwegian-American voting could be found. Although at first it seemed that settlements peopled mainly by western Norwegians occasionally voted more strongly Republican, this simply reflected the fact that most of these settlements were located in the stronger Republican states of Iowa and Wisconsin. Because only 108 settlements could be identified according to their pre-dominant region of origin in Norway, the voting tendencies noted are based on less complete voting returns than are those presented in other Figures and Tables of this study. On the contrasts between eastern and western Norwegians, see Arvid Sandaker, "Emigration from Land Parish to America, 1866-1875," tr. and ed., C. A. Clausen, Norwegian-American Studies, Volume 26 (Northfield, Minn., 1974), p. 51; Blegen, Norwegian Migration: 1825-1860, pp. 10, 74-76; Einar Haugen, The Norwegian Language in America, Volume II, (2nd ed.: Bloomington, Ind., 1969), pp. 338-349; Rokkan and Valen, "Regional Contrasts," 199-202.

⁴³The literature concerning state political culture is sparse. The preeminent work is Daniel J. Elazar's American Federalism: A View from the States (New York, 1966), and his later elaboration, Cities of the Prairie: The Metropolitan Frontier and American Politics (New York, 1970). See also Raymond D. Gastil, Cultural Regions of the United States (Seattle, 1975), pp. 54-70; John H. Fenton, Midwest Politics (New York, 1966).

⁴⁴Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910 (Washington, 1911), I, 30, 929.

⁴⁵See Table 10, Appendix C.

⁴⁶Of the ninety combined elections for governor in the three states from 1865 to 1924, Democrats achieved election only ten times. But these Democratic victories distributed themselves unevenly. Iowa Democrats won but two contests (1889, 1891); Wisconsin Democrats won three

elections (1873, 1890, 1892) and Minnesota Democrats captured the governor's chair five times (1898, 1904, 1906, 1908, 1916).

⁴⁷During this period, majorities of more than 53 percent went to Republican candidates in eight elections in Iowa, four in Wisconsin and three in Minnesota.

⁴⁸Refer Appendix A for explanation of how I computed estimates of voter turnout.

⁴⁹This occurred in 1883, 1896-1898 and 1904-1906.

⁵⁰Bureau of the Census, Special Reports, Religious Bodies: 1906 (Washington, 1910), pt. 1, p. 62.

⁵¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, I, 30, 929.

⁵²For discussion of general A.P.A. developments, see: Donald L. Kinzer, An Episode in Anti-Catholicism: The American Protective Association (Seattle, 1964); Allen W. Burns, "The A.P.A. and the Anti-Catholic Crusade: 1885-1898" (Master's thesis, Columbia University, 1947); John Higham, Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925 (New York, 1963), pp. 62-63, 79-87; Humphrey J. Desmond, The A.P.A. Movement: A Sketch (Washington, D.C., 1912); Howard Carl Lundvall, "The American Protective Association: A Study of an Anti-Catholic Organization" (Master's thesis, State University of Iowa, 1950); Alvin Packer Stauffer, Jr., "Anti-Catholicism in American Politics, 1865-1900" (doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 1933).

⁵³Mary Callista Hynes, "The History of the American Protective Association in Minnesota" (Master's thesis, Catholic University of America, ca. 1939), p. 3; Higham, Strangers in the Land, p. 81.

⁵⁴Minneapolis (Minn.) Loyal American and the North, Feb. 17, 1894.

⁵⁵Ibid.; "Medole" in ibid., May 12, 1894.

⁵⁶See John P. Boccock, "The Irish Conquest of our Cities," Forum, XVII (1894), 186-195; Boyesen, "Scandinavian in the United States," p. 528; The North, Sept. 17, 1890.

⁵⁷Quoted in a supplement to the Duluth (Minn.) Scandia, May 27, 1893. For expressions of Swedish-American newspaper reaction, see Fritiof Ander, "The Swedish-American Press and the American Protective Association," Church History, VI (1937), 165-179.

⁵⁸Minneapolis (Minn.) Folkebladet, quoted in The North, Aug. 16, 1893.

⁵⁹Decorah (Ia.) Christian Youth, reprinted in Minneapolis (Minn.) Loyal American, July 29, 1893.

⁶⁰"Medole" in Loyal American and the North, May 12, 1894.

⁶¹Bocock, "The Irish Conquest," pp. 186-195; Arlow William Andersen, The Immigrant Takes His Stand: The Norwegian-American Press and Public Affairs, 1847-1872 (Northfield, Minn., 1953), p. 147.

⁶²Paul Knaplund, Moorings Old and New: Entries in an Immigrant's Log (Madison, 1963), p. 159.

⁶³Loyal American and the North, Aug. 11, 1894.

⁶⁴Minneapolis (Minn.) Irish Standard, Mar. 25, 1893.

⁶⁵Loyal American, Dec. 2, 1893.

⁶⁶According to Grace McDonald, History of the Irish in Wisconsin In the Nineteenth Century (New York, 1976), pp. 184-185, the association in Wisconsin "never flourished as well as in some of the neighboring states" although it offered Democrats an opportunity to solidify the Catholic vote. As for Norwegian participation, Desmond, in his A.P.A. Movement, p. 45, writes that "in Milwaukee, the Germans and the Norwegians, in 1894, undoubtedly made up a clear majority in the councils."

⁶⁷Loyal American, Dec. 30, 1893.

⁶⁸Ibid., July 29, 1893, Jan. 27, 1894.

⁶⁹Irish Standard, quoted in Hynes, "A.P.A. in Minnesota," p. 43.

⁷⁰Hynes, "A.P.A. in Minnesota," p. 43.

⁷¹Irish Standard, May 6, 1893.

⁷²Minneapolis (Minn.) Journal, reprinted in Loyal American and the North, Apr. 28, 1894.

⁷³St. Paul (Minn.) Daily Globe, Irish Standard, and Adrian (Minn.) Guardian, quoted in Hynes, "A.P.A. in Minnesota," pp. 44, 52.

⁷⁴Loyal American and the North, July 7, 1894.

⁷⁵Ibid., Nov. 10, 1894; Hynes, "A.P.A. in Minnesota," p. 91.

⁷⁶Kinzer, Episode in Anti-Catholicism, p. 171.

⁷⁷Iowa Falls (Ia.) Sentinel, Oct. 23, 1867.

⁷⁸Babcock, Scandinavian Element, p. 171.

⁷⁹O. M. Norlie, History of the Norwegian People in America (Minneapolis, 1925), pp. 435, 517-518.

⁸⁰Kenneth Smemo, "The Immigrant as Reformer: The Case of the Norwegian-American" (Paper delivered at the Sixty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians, Chicago, Ill., April 13, 1973), p. 14.

⁸¹Norlie, History of the Norwegian People, p. 518.

⁸²Andersen, Immigrant Takes His Stand, p. 122.

⁸³The North, June 29, 1892.

⁸⁴Ingrid Semmingsen, "The Dissolution of Estate Society in Norway," Scandinavian Economic History Review, II (1954), 174.

⁸⁵The relationship of the temperance crusade to pietist movements in Norway are noted in Blegen, Norwegian Migration: The American Transition (Northfield, Minn., 1940), p. 223; Stein Rokkan and Henry Valen, "Regional Contrasts in Norwegian Politics," Mass Politics: Studies in Political Sociology, ed. Erik Allardt and Stein Rokkan (New York, 1970), p. 209; Smemo, "Immigrant as Reformer," pp. 5-6.

⁸⁶T. K. Derry, A History of Modern Norway, 1814-1972 (London, 1973), p. 37; The Cyclopaedia of Temperance and Prohibition (New York, 1891), p. 454.

⁸⁷Blegen, Norwegian Migration: The American Transition, p. 204.

⁸⁸Cyclopaedia of Temperance and Prohibition, p. 455.

⁸⁹The North, Sept. 28, 1892.

⁹⁰Rokkan and Valen, "Regional Contrasts," pp. 193, 209, 216.

⁹¹John Martin Vincent and Milton Offutt, "Norway's Decisive Vote to Repeal Prohibition," Current History, XXV (1926), 422-423; Ronald G. Popperwell, Norway (New York, 1972), pp. 278-279; Karen Larson, A History of Norway (New York, 1948), p. 521; Derry, History of Modern Norway, pp. 155-156, 176-177, 291, 300-304.

⁹²Blegen, Norwegian Migration: The American Transition, p. 205.

⁹³Paul Reigstad, Rølvaag: His Life and Art (Lincoln, Neb., 1972), p. 88; C. Somner Sorenson, "A Comparison of the Views of Hamsun, Rølvaag, and Feikema on Rural Society" (Master's thesis, State University of Iowa, 1955), p. 52.

⁹⁴Ole. E. Rølvaag, Giants in the Earth, trans. Lincoln Colcord and O. E. Rølvaag (New York, 1929), pp. 178, 281-283; Rølvaag, Peder Victorious, pp. 230, 245.

⁹⁵Ibid.; Stein Rokkan, "Geography, Religion and Social Class," Party Systems and Voter Alignments, ed. S. M. Lipset and S. Rokkan (New York, 1967), pp. 372, 415-419.

⁹⁶Expressed as a percentage of the total estimated state population in 1906, members of the Lutheran Synodical Conference constituted 7 percent in Wisconsin, 3 percent in Minnesota and 1 percent in Iowa. Bureau of the Census, Special Reports, Religious Bodies: 1906, pt. 1, pp. 311, 327, 371.

⁹⁷Table 12, Appendix C summarizes the findings of partial and multiple correlations between Republican gubernatorial votes and five variables that consistently produced individual correlations greater than $\pm .30$. While they collectively evinced only limited ability to often account for more than one-third of the total

variations, thus indicating that other important factors were at work, the variables of national background and percent liturgical Lutheran church affiliation clearly expressed a linear relationship to the vote.

⁹⁸ According to this view, "pietistic-evangelical" groups sought through the Republican party to superimpose their moral values on society in such forms as Sunday blue laws, prohibition and parochial school restrictions. Conversely, the Democratic party attracted those groups of liturgical orientation that opposed a morally activist government intervening to prescribe codes of personal behavior. Such activities liturgicals believed fell most properly within the sphere of the church. The influence of this religious dimension on Midwestern politics is described in Paul Kleppner, The Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics: 1850-1900 (New York, 1970), pp. 71, 316-368; Richard J. Jensen, The Winning of the Midwest, 1888-1896 (Chicago, 1971), pp. xiii, 58-88, 269-308.

⁹⁹ Jensen, Winning of the Midwest, pp. 89-121; Dan E. Clark, "Recent Liquor Legislation in Iowa," Iowa Journal of History and Politics, XV (1917), 44-46; Ballard C. Campbell, "Did Democracy Work? Prohibition in Late Nineteenth-Century Iowa: A Test Case," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, VIII (1977), 87-116.

¹⁰⁰ See Jensen, Winning of the Midwest, p. 81.

¹⁰¹ Throughout the 1880's Highland Township did not further weaken in its Republicanism as did the other three Norwegian Synod townships, but instead continued to vote over 87 percent Republican for governor.

¹⁰² Laurence M. Larson, The Log Book of a Young Immigrant (Northfield, Minn., 1939), p. 57.

¹⁰³ A post-election report pointed out the Scandinavians' disenchantment with the prohibition amendment: "The Scandinavians are . . . divided on the liquor question. They don't always agree with the Germans in their antipathy to prohibitory laws, and sometimes are even inclined to take just the opposite side to that supported by the German element. The Iowa Democrats reduced, however, in a remarkable degree, the immense Republican majority of the last elections, the gains being especially noticeable in some of the northern Scandinavian counties." "The Scandinavians in the Late American Elections," Scandinavia, II (1883), 26.

CHAPTER III
NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN POPULISM
AND ALLIANCE POLITICS
IN OTTER TAIL COUNTY

[W]hen it dawned on the Norwegians that Republicanism had abandoned its humane mission of protecting the oppressed; that it stands for classes and against the masses; that Republicanism had on the ruins of black slavery built up a system of national slavery of all the producing classes regardless of color or previous conditions; then the intelligent part of them, except such as who were receiving or expected to receive, favors, from the Republican party, left that party and allied themselves with the new party of financial and industrial emancipation, the People's party.¹

This forceful statement of an energetic Norwegian-American politician from Minnesota voiced the feelings of countless Norwegian-Americans in 1896. Norwegian agrarian radicalism came easy to those living in areas where politics were thick with farmer dissatisfaction. Their rural traditions readily accommodated ideas of oppression by elites and officials. But elsewhere, the overwhelming majority of Norwegian townships eschewed Populism and clung to the Republican party.

I

Broadly speaking, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa resembled one another. All comprised prairie states that had reached statehood before the Civil War, all contained social and cultural composition of a roughly similar kind, and each rested on an economic base of commercial agriculture and its related industries. But beyond that, the differences among them compel attention.

In their agricultural development, all began as wheat growing states, but soon matured along separate lines. Topography, soil and climatic conditions combined with the proximity of products to markets to favor regional specialties.² Iowa's gently rolling prairies, with the exception of its rougher northeast corner, became the heart of the Corn Belt with its accompanying beef-cattle and swine industry. On the cooler hilly lands of Wisconsin where much land was unfit for row crops, hay and forage took the place of corn and increasingly dairying superseded beef-cattle and hog production as the principal livestock enterprise. A mixed three region situation emerged in Minnesota: hay and dairying in the southeast, corn and hog raising in the southwest, and spring wheat and small grains in the west and northwestern counties. Also unlike Iowa, large tracts of rough and

swampy timberland unsuitable for commercial agriculture covered northern Wisconsin and northeastern Minnesota.

As for profitability, spring wheat farming ranked behind dairying or corn and livestock. Located mainly in western Minnesota and in lands to the west and north, wheat cash crop farming required comparatively little capital outlay in buildings, livestock and year-round labor needs. But the risks of unfavorable moisture and temperature conditions and the long distances to consumption markets made profit margins unpredictable as did problems of overproduction. To offset the higher transportation costs, wheat farmers ordinarily shipped the bulky raw grain to nearby points where mills concentrated it into flour for further shipment east. Minneapolis, situated on the eastern fringe of the spring wheat region, soon became the leading wheat milling center.³

The pace of agricultural change accelerated during the latter part of the nineteenth century and it unevenly altered America's agricultural areas. Technically advanced farmers enjoyed the new distant markets opened by the refrigerated boxcar and remarkably expanding transportation systems, but most farmers suffered under varying degrees of economic distress from 1867 to 1898. Over-expansion had occurred, due in no small part to railroads opening vast new lands to commercial production. But also

the farmer faced rising costs of production (labor, interest, transport, taxes, fertilizer), diminished foreign markets, high tariffs, and staggering competition. Further complicating problems of overproduction, the amount of currency in circulation did not expand accordingly. This intensified the strain on debtor farmers--especially in developing areas where high capital demands boosted mortgage interest rates--and, as a consequence, Farmers' Alliance and Populist party movements flourished during the eighties and nineties in the most distressed areas.⁴

Iowa in the 1870's had led all others as the banner state of the Granger movement.⁵ But the state's shift toward diversified farming in the 1880's absorbed most Populist militancy that might have developed. Generally prospering under these arrangements, farmers saw little reason to vote for Populist candidates, despite Iowa's association with the national Populist movement through the leadership of James B. Weaver of Bloomfield, who stood as the party's presidential candidate in 1892. The People's party in Iowa, having fewer grievances to push, dwelled on broad issues such as monetary reform. Anti-railroad agitation, the most pressing immediate question at the root of much agrarian discontent, had in Iowa largely dissipated after 1888 when Governor William

Larrabee and a reform minded legislature passed Iowa's equivalent of the federal Interstate Commerce Act.⁶

In the heavily Norwegian areas of Iowa, what remained of wheat raising as of 1895 confined itself to the most recently settled north-central counties--Winnebago, Emmet and Humboldt. Here Populist agitation ignited some enthusiasm; Winnebago County's Norwegian townships gave one-fourth to one-half of their votes to the Populist candidate for governor.⁷ Conversely, the older Norwegian-American settlements of corn producing south-central Iowa (Story, Hamilton and Hardin counties) succumbed hardly at all to Populist appeals.⁸

The Populist party also proved weak both in Wisconsin as a whole and among its many Norwegian townships. In 1892 the Populist candidate for governor won but 3 percent of the statewide vote and only 4 percent from Norwegian settlements. Two years later, the average Populist vote of these settlements declined further, trailing 3 percentage points behind that of the state at large. The 1892 vote showed that only five of forty-seven heavily Norwegian townships and villages cast 20 percent or more of their votes for the Populist gubernatorial candidate and, by 1894, the number of such settlements had declined to three.⁹

These few townships shared certain distinctive characteristics. As in Iowa, they remained among the most recently settled areas, where Republicanism had not yet matured.¹⁰ Also, the Populist vote escalated in the poorest Norwegian areas characterized by lower average land values and by potato growing, a main cash crop grown on the poorer, thinner soils to the north.¹¹ Together, the circumstances of being freshly settled and in poorer sections of Wisconsin evidently attracted some movement toward Populism. But Wisconsin Populism held little to excite Norwegian involvement. Largely a creation of Robert Schilling, a labor union organizer, the Wisconsin People's party advocated programs more attuned to the interests of industrial workers than to farmers, this despite the party's attempts to court farm groups. Under this kind of Populist leadership, the grievances they pushed in Wisconsin left Norwegian farmers largely unimpressed.¹²

Furthermore, Congressman Nils P. Haugen, Wisconsin's Norwegian-American politician of prominence during this time, remained a dedicated Republican. Haugen's important ethnic contacts and his popularity among Norwegian voters undoubtedly helped to minimize Populist defections. Yet another source of Norwegian disinterest in Populism may have been the distraction of a more compelling controversy--

the Bennett Law issue.¹³ This Republican supported legislation of 1890 threatened foreign language parochial schools by requiring that certain subjects be taught in English. The conservative Norwegian Synod vehemently opposed the law and labored to swing Norwegian Lutheran elements behind a political effort to punish the Republican incumbent in the gubernatorial election. But although their efforts brought about some defection, even Norwegian Synod settlements still cast 57 percent of their vote for the Republican governor.¹⁴

II

That the agricultural movement of the nineties stirred only minimal Norwegian involvement in Iowa and Wisconsin would appear to underscore the absence of radicalism among Norwegians generally. But given the proper mix of conditions, latent Norwegian agrarianism could and did burst forth. These favorable conditions presented themselves in Minnesota.

Each of the three successive waves of Norwegian immigrants to Minnesota settled primarily in a new region with a system of farming distinguishable from the others. The Norwegian townships that took shape between 1850 and 1865 helped fill in the southeastern triangle of the state, a section that by 1890 had shifted from wheat to a

diversified dairy farming area. The second wave of immigration, which lasted from the late 1860's to the mid-1870's and spread across prairies of the state's west central counties, formed a transition agricultural region between the corn and wheat belts where Norwegian settlements pursued mixed grain farming. A third phase of heavy immigration, which accompanied an upturn in business activity after the Panic of 1873, spilled into the Red River Valley and helped to make it the heart of the spring wheat cash crop region. On these cool less humid prairies, farmers met difficulty in expanding beyond small grain farming to general farming and the short cooler growing season limited corn yields that might otherwise have stimulated stock raising and dairying. When economic conditions worsened, agricultural discontent multiplied in the freshly settled spring wheat belt.¹⁵

The Norwegian-American farmer responded to these developments in light of his own economic prospects supplemented by what he heard from neighbors and local politicians and what he read in the newspapers. In the southeastern part of the state, Norwegian farmers had long enjoyed associations with Republicans and their leading men had for years identified themselves as Republican members and officials. Additionally, because rail connections and the market for their dairy and meat products tied

them more to Chicago and Milwaukee than to the Twin Cities, Norwegian-American farmers relied more often on news published in the staunchly Republican Chicago Skandinaven.¹⁶ These fundamental factors stunted Populism in downstate areas, incapacitating the movement's ability to dominate issues and move Norwegian-American farmers to sever their Republican party connections.

Further to the northwest, however, Norwegian settlers faced far different circumstances. Party organizations--stemming as they did from time and important events--had yet to mature there because political events dictated change. In these counties increasingly prominent agrarian and economic questions had forced the Republicans into a defensive posture. Here the politically immature Norwegian arrival heard fewer recollections of a Republican party formed out of the slavery question and absorbed talk of a party rooted in protectionism and balking at tariff reform. And finally, here lived politically ambitious countrymen who recognized the Norwegian farmers' traditional distrust of official ruling groups and who stood willing to press these issues and use their ethnic and Farmers' Alliance ties to reach higher political office. In short, here economic agricultural issues came to frame the farmers' political outlook and draw forth Norwegian-American antipathies toward officials and economic interests. If

possible, his anti-Catholicism led him to prefer that economic reform come from the Republican rather than the Democratic party. But when this failed to materialize, large numbers opened themselves to third party appeals. Consequently, Norwegian settlements of each agricultural region went their own political ways.

Some studies have since suggested that during the Populist-Progressive era, in the words of Samuel Hays, "ethno-cultural issues were far more important to voters than were tariffs, trusts, and railroads" because "they touched lives directly and moved people deeply."¹⁷ The influence of such matters cannot be doubted, for nationality and religious feelings carried great political weight when aroused. But this did not often happen with regularity and, also, the issues did not exist in a vacuum; they competed for the voters attention in places where many farmers saw the tariff, trusts and railroads as touching their lives directly and deeply. Construction of the Northern Pacific and St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba railroads had opened up the hard wheat belt and stimulated the construction of immense flouring mills in Minneapolis. But the farmers that flocked into the Red River Valley had soon felt dependency to be their lot.¹⁸

Increasingly northwestern Minnesota farmers believed that The Millers Association of Minneapolis controlled

"railways and elevator systems to an extent that no wheat could leave the country without passing through its hands, and it practically controlled the sale of wheat in the only section of the United States where hard wheat can be grown."¹⁹ Many Norman County farmers stood convinced that the line elevators were running competing firms out of business. "Look at the opposition elevators in Ada," wrote a local editor, "the millers of Minneapolis have long ago put a quietus on them. They would not dare to raise the price of wheat a cent over the millers quotations for fear of being swooped upon and annihilated."²⁰ And when farmers heard that buyers at one station avoided bids against one another or those of nearby stations, many concluded that, when it came to influencing the price for wheat in Chicago, the Minneapolis millers "have at least as much to do with it as Liverpool or London."²¹

Through the later eighties, with prices falling, publicity focused on abuses in the market and resentment hardened in the northwestern counties.²² Unable to cope with agricultural grievances, the Republican party leadership became saddled with an image that regarded it as callous and insensitive. Real or supposed marketing abuses primarily bound the farmers' movement together although many agrarians embraced low tariff views, believing that protectionism only closed markets for their

produce abroad and raised costs for what they had to buy at home.

When in 1890 passage of the McKinley Tariff coincided with when the Minnesota Farmers Alliance formed a separate political party, the storm broke and Republicans could do little more than seek shelter.²³ In northwestern Minnesota, the Republican gubernatorial vote from Norwegian settlements plunged to 10 percent. Republicans did scarcely better from Norwegian townships in the west-central counties, where they captured less than one-third of the vote. But in the Norwegian areas of southeastern Minnesota the Republican candidate still brought in firm majorities.

The consequences for Minnesota Republicans remained visible for a generation. A major realignment in a major region had occurred (Figure 15). The party had lost the allegiance of Minnesota's most recent, most economically vulnerable Norwegian settlements.

The influence of regional distinctions within the state is striking. Table 3 compares by region the mean average vote given to agrarian party candidates for governor during the nineties. Curiously, southeast Minnesota Norwegian settlements proved even more conservative than the surrounding counties within which they were located. But in northwestern Minnesota precisely the

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN MINNESOTA'S
GUBERNATORIAL VOTING

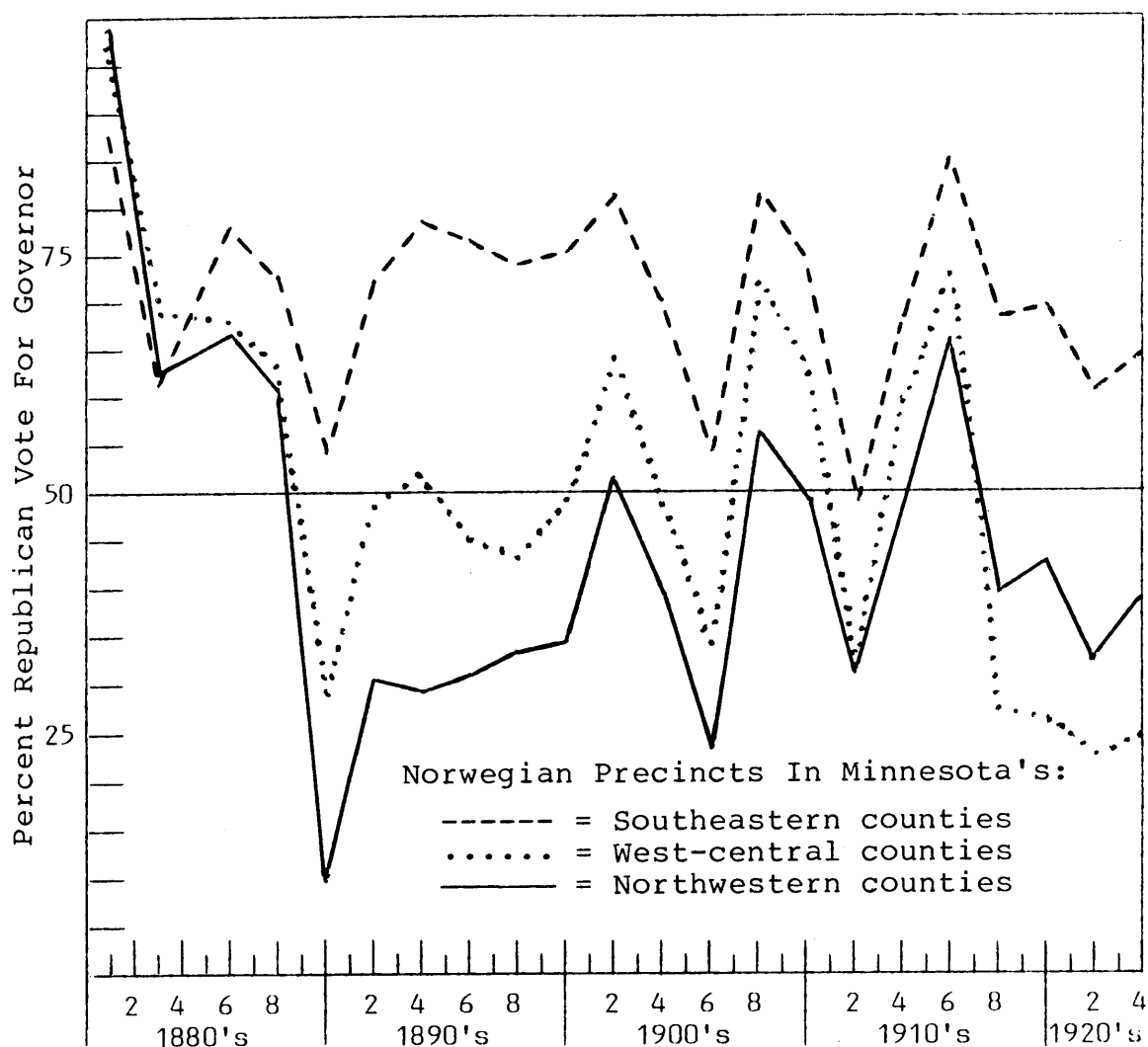


Figure 15. Republican share of vote for governor in Norwegian settlements of three Minnesota regions. Counties of each region were as follows: Southeastern (Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston); West-central (Chippewa, Kandiyohi, Meeker, Swift); Northwestern (Becker, Clay, Clearwater, Norman, Otter Tail, Polk, Wilkin).

Table 3

Extent that Votes by Minnesota's Norwegian
Settlements for Agrarian^a Gubernatorial
Candidates Exceeded or Fell Short of
that Given by the Region as a Whole

Region	1890	1892	1894	1896
Southeast Counties	7.6%	-0.8%	-6.7%	-11.9%
West Central Counties	21.9%	8.9%	0.6%	-0.7%
Northwest Counties	25.9%	18.2%	12.2%	5.3%

^aIncludes Farmers' Alliance, Peoples Party and Democratic-Populist candidates. Each region encompassed the following counties: Southeast (Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston); West Central (Chippewa, Kandiyohi, Meeker, Swift); Northwest (Becker, Clay, Clearwater, Norman, Otter Tail, Polk, Wilkin).

opposite effect occurred; Norwegian communities joined the front ranks of Populist insurgency.

Expectedly, when I sought possible sources of the divided Norwegian-American voting patterns in Minnesota, economic indicators such as percent wheat acreage and average farm values emerged clearly.²⁴ Absolutely no connection existed between Populism and the pietist or liturgical Lutheran orientation of Norwegian settlements.²⁵ Neither did the vote relate to whether people in the settlements originated principally from eastern or western Norway. But there is some indication that other conditions played a role. Relative isolation of the northwestern counties perhaps combined with distances to economic services in towns and the inaccessibility to county political activities to reinforce feelings that farmers were peripheral to centers of power that controlled their lives. Whatever the reason, as noted above, less advantageously situated Norwegian townships consequently voted less Republican.²⁶ Also, predominantly Norwegian small towns and villages situated in areas of Populist agitation adhered more closely than their farmer neighbors to the embattled Republican party.²⁷ Finally, the phenomenon of Norwegians voting for Norwegians was evident during these years, but it played an inconstant role. Also, no indication surfaced of Norwegian bloc voting for one or another party; votes

neither consistently nor strongly corresponded to percentages of Norwegian people in townships.²⁸

The 1890 disaster left Minnesota's Republican party thoroughly shaken. To halt the advancing prairie fire and turn it if possible, they desperately turned to ex-congressman Knute Nelson. This Norwegian-born lawyer of Douglas County, in whom the G.O.P. wheelhorses now sought the party's salvation, had in years past hardly enjoyed their undivided good will. Nelson had struggled against the G.O.P.'s native-born leadership to become the first Scandinavian elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, a position he held from 1883 to 1889. And while there he had voted for tariff reform, against his party's wishes, not once but on two occasions.²⁹ Although his independent spirit endeared him to his low tariff countrymen in northwestern Minnesota's Fifth District, in the higher circles of the state's Republican party Nelson was viewed as a troublesome maverick.

But, in this demoralized Republican year of 1892, the party powers showed themselves more than happy to forgive and forget. To them, Nelson had already lightened the burden of his political sins by his eleventh hour endorsement of the McKinley Tariff in 1890. This act helped save Governor William Merriam's election although it injured Nelson among his former low tariff constituents

in a manner akin to the public's estimate of the accused who turns state's evidence--many accepted the testimony while reducing their respect for the man.³⁰ Be that as it may, Knute Nelson later recalled with pride how the Republican party leaders, "especially the Americans," came to him "and insisted that I must become our candidate for Governor on the regular Republican ticket."³¹ Native-born leaders expected by this move to see Norwegian farmers, who made up the core of the People's party support, relegate their agrarian fervor to second place in the interests of seeing one of their own attain the governorship. By this, Republicans hoped to start a backfire in the Populist stubble.³²

Following his nomination, Nelson traveled throughout the state appearing at political rallies, sometimes two or three a day. He straddled the tariff question by arguing that "the issue was no longer between high tariff and low tariff, but between protection and free trade." And so, under these circumstances, he claimed to be "a protectionist."³³

While the popular Nelson succeeded in his election bid, he failed to bring Norwegian dissidents back to the Republican fold. In the southeastern Minnesota precincts, Norwegian settlements gave Nelson strong majorities--nearly three-fourths of their vote. But he got less than

one-third of the vote from their counterparts in north-western Minnesota. In the four most homogeneous Norwegian townships of Otter Tail County, for instance, Nelson received only 15 percent of the votes cast, up a scant 9 percentage points from 1890.³⁴ Ethnic pride in 1892 definitely cut little into their agricultural discontent.

In the state at large, nationality feelings had contributed something although it is difficult to say exactly how much. Republican votes from non-Norwegian areas had risen 5 percentage points over their vote of 1890, while they increased an average 19 percentage points in Norwegian-American townships and villages. This would appear to indicate that 14 percentage points might be due to Nelson's nationality. It should be kept in mind, however, that at least two other influences contributed a share to that 14 percentage point increase. In 1892 Nelson had added votes to his victory margin by facing a less popular agricultural protest opponent than had his predecessor in 1890. The plain-spoken Knute Nelson stood in striking contrast to the flamboyant, mercurial Ignatius Donnelly, whose controversial leadership of the forces of agricultural discontent strained Norwegian-American third party enthusiasm. Still, despite Donnelly's weaknesses, Knute Nelson later conceded that one half of the Populist leader's votes came from "Norwegians who had got badly

infected by the new party."³⁵ A second new source of Nelson's support stemmed from the rapidly expanding American Protective Association, which encouraged Norwegian anti-Catholics to vote for Nelson by publicizing the Irish-Catholic backgrounds of both his Democratic and People's party opponents. "I do not believe you have much to fear" from "Knownothingism," assured a political confidant to Nelson, for "you have on your side two elements that will neutralize any work that may be attempted on this line--the Grand Army and the anti-Catholics."³⁶ This apparently had some effect. "Scandinavian pastors," charged the editor of the Irish Standard, had "appealed to the religious prejudice which was lying dormant in the breasts of their countrymen," and he concluded the key Minnesota issue of 1892 to have been "Lutheranism versus Catholicism."³⁷ Such influences call into question any estimates about the extent that Norwegian-Americans voted for Nelson simply on account of his nationality.

III

The politics of Otter Tail County in northwestern Minnesota, well illustrate how these developments agitated-- as well as contained--the political force of Norwegian-American agrarianism.

The effectiveness of local leaders decided to a great extent how closely a Norwegian-American settlement adhered to the general political patterns of Otter Tail County or to those of their counterparts elsewhere. But favorable or unfavorable circumstance set limits to their control. The strength of one's opponents, the clashing goals of one's friends, the timing of political events, the degree of political organization--all these, depending on how they combined, strengthened or weakened agrarian feelings among Norwegian-American farmers where they could make their political weight felt.

Otter Tail County received its first major influx of settlers in the late 1860's. Settlement proceeded rapidly across the county's numerous prairie belts and out onto the open grasslands of Otter Tail's southwestern townships. But elsewhere, unyielding landscape features interrupted the pioneers' orderly occupation of the land. Ubiquitous lakes, plentiful marshlands and intermittently rough and rolling surfaces in some sections offered scenic beauty but only mixed possibilities for farming. Over one thousand lakes, for example, lay scattered among Otter Tail's hilly central townships, while hardwood forests extended across the eastern two-thirds of the county and coniferous forest prevailed in its easternmost portions. Still, between 1870 and 1905, the number of inhabitants

grew from less than two thousand to over forty-five thousand. The pace of settlement increased sharply when two leading railroad lines cut across the county during the early 1870's (see Figure 16). Their locations tended to divide the social and economic orientation of villages, with those along the Great Northern line having closer relations with Fergus Falls and those along the Northern Pacific line more closely associated with Perham. Fergus Falls, the county seat after 1872, became the largest and most important city in Otter Tail County.³⁸

Although one-hundred-and-sixty-acre farms of Otter Tail County did not match in size those further northward in the Red River Valley region, farmers shared with their northern neighbors spring wheat production as a dominant agricultural pursuit. Of course, some farmers tried corn production while others in the timbered parts of the county saw opportunities in raising livestock on their marsh hay and timber pasture acreages, but they comprised a minority. Wheat was king in Otter Tail County during these years.³⁹

Immigrants from four European countries comprised most of the county's residents. Norwegians clearly predominated, followed in descending order by Germans, Swedes and Finns.⁴⁰ The Norwegians took up land in the less timbered southwestern one-half of Otter Tail County and

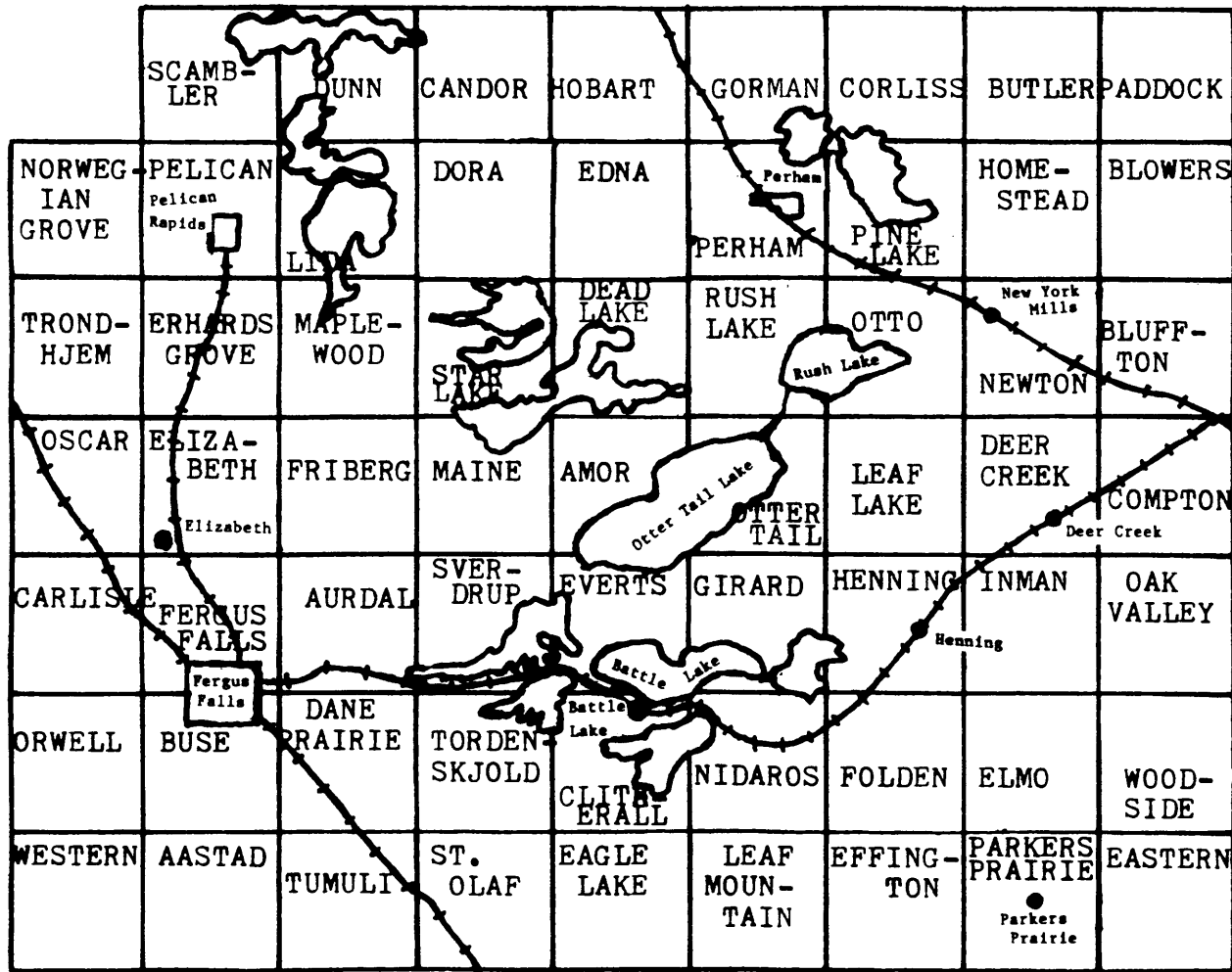


Figure 16. Otter Tail County, Minnesota, 1895. Includes major towns, lakes and railroads.

shortly constituted more than half the total voters in thirteen townships.⁴¹ Germans concentrated themselves in the northeastern half of the county: German Catholics clustered around Perham while German Lutherans predominated in Corliss and Gorman townships just to the north. Elsewhere, mixed German Catholic and Lutheran populations lived in Effington and Elisabeth townships. Swedes, quite numerous but more dispersed in their settlement, constituted majorities in only Eastern and Amor townships. Finns pushed further to the northeast and prominently filled the townships of Newton, Otto, Blowers, Paddock and Deer Creek. All four nationality groups initially settled the countryside while native-born settlers, and those of English, Scotch and Irish birth more frequently populated the villages.⁴² By 1895, however, these differences had lost their sharpness.

IV

During 1884 Farmers' Alliance organizing expanded both in the county and in the state at large.⁴³ On March 7, Otter Tail farmers held an "anti-monopoly" mass meeting at Battle Lake and it attracted a large crowd of participants from nearly half of the county's sixty-two townships. A young Norwegian-American, Haldor Boen, became one of ten delegates representing the county at the larger

mass meeting of farmers in St. Paul later that month. The emerging movement soon focused its energies on extending control over Republican party politics. Of the two primary Otter Tail County leaders that emerged, John B. Hompe held by 1888 the positions of state representative to the legislature and president of the Otter Tail Alliance before achieving election to the state senate in 1890. Haldor E. Boen, by contrast, gained influence less through holding prestigious offices than through working within the Alliance organization.

John Hompe, of Dutch extraction, had spent his younger manhood years in eastern New York state and, after army service during the Civil War, had come west in the 1870's. Ambitious and well-liked, the thirty-eight year old farmer took the lead in April of 1884 to organize a Farmers' Alliance in his own township of Deer Creek. By mid-May his local Alliance issued a call for sister Alliances to meet at Battle Lake and form a Farmers' County Alliance.⁴⁴

But if Hompe sparked the formation of the new county organization, Haldor Boen became the flywheel maintaining its balance of power. Norwegian-Americans filled the largest township Alliances and, as their principal organizer, Boen before long wielded a major share of the power within the county organization. Haldor Boen had come to Minnesota in 1868, when at age seventeen he and

two brothers emigrated from Norway. Within a short time he had mastered enough English briefly to attend the state normal school at St. Cloud before moving on in 1870 to locate in Otter Tail County. There Boen's facility with English brought him work in the county auditor's office until he bought eighty acres nearby in Aurdal Township in order to take up farming and teaching. But already by the time of his marriage at age twenty-four, the aggressive and eager political aspirant was active in local Republican politics. His election to various township offices coupled with a term as county commissioner in 1880 and intermittent service as deputy sheriff prepared Boen to lead in organizing Norwegian-American wheat farmers in 1884.⁴⁵ When the local Alliances met in Battle Lake at the behest of Hompe's Deer Creek Alliance, the resulting new County Alliance selected Haldor Boen as secretary.⁴⁶

That September at the Republican county convention the new County Alliance made its first attempt to influence nominations. On the evening before the convention a number of the farmers met and endorsed their native-born chairman, Washington Muzzy and a Norwegian-American, Hans P. Bjorge as candidates for the legislature, based upon the two men's commitment to Alliance reforms and to Muzzy's ability to "intelligently and forcibly" express his views in public. The next day's Republican convention endorsed

both Alliance choices, partly because many farmer delegates favored the Alliance selections and partly because the party wanted to preempt any Democratic attempts to court the Alliance candidates.⁴⁷ The Alliacemen did not press at this time for any other offices, but internal disharmony showed itself when Haldor Boen, evidently disappointed at not having been endorsed instead of Bjorge, later canvassed the county to see if he could muster enough strength as an independent legislative candidate. Ultimately though, he decided not to challenge the Alliance selection.⁴⁸

The modest strategy of the County Farmers' Alliance in 1884 gave way in 1886 to an unsuccessful attempt by the Alliance to expand control over county nominations. Having doubled the membership of the local Alliances over the past year, Alliacemen's appetite for office had likewise increased. Members of the County Alliance met in Battle Lake. Despite some expressed qualms, those in attendance selected candidates for both county and legislative offices. John Hompe obtained the nomination for state senator and Haldor Boen received the nod for county register of deeds.⁴⁹ But despite favorable reaction in the next issue of the Ugeblad, the local Norwegian newspaper, other Republican leaders balked.⁵⁰ When the

Republican delegates convened in July, Alliancemen gained no more than they had two years before.⁵¹

Stung by their rejection, Boen and Hompe mounted independent candidacies based on their Alliance endorsement.⁵² Hompe tried and failed to obtain additional endorsement by Democrats at their county convention, but he did secure that of the Prohibitionists. Boen's service as a member of the executive committee of the State Alliance had placed him high within the local and state movement, but neither he nor Hompe could overcome the loss of the Republican party nomination. Election returns, as might be expected, showed that Boen and Hompe each drew their vote from slightly different constituencies. Boen outperformed Hompe in the thirteen principal Norwegian-American townships--winning 72 percent compared to Hompe's 59 percent--while Hompe drew greater votes from eastern townships surrounding his home in Deer Creek. But despite each winning pluralities in twenty-six townships, the gains failed to offset losses elsewhere, especially in Fergus Falls. Only those Alliance endorsements nominated by the Republicans made it into office.⁵³

As the 1888 election campaign approached, a corrosive air of personal acrimony began to seep into the County Alliance. Perhaps symptomatic of brewing troubles, the number of local Alliances had declined.⁵⁴ Submerged

personal animosities finally erupted in attacks on Haldor Boen because of actions taken by the executive committee of the State Alliance, a body on which Boen held the position of corresponding secretary. Members of the state executive committee, frustrated in their efforts to force issues on the old parties, had now tried at their March meeting to force the Republican party to nominate for governor a more favorable reform candidate. Unexpectedly, when only Albert Scheffer, a St. Paul banker, showed up and announced his intent to support the platform, this apparent endorsement brought down a storm of criticism on the committee by others who favored the candidacy of A. R. McGill or remained convinced that Scheffer still remained a Democrat.⁵⁵ But in Otter Tail County, persons unfriendly to Haldor Boen or who feared his growing power, seized the occasion to cut their local secretary down to size.

A prominent county Allianceman took the first shot at him. State representative Henry Plowman wrote to the Fergus Falls Journal complaining that the move by the state executive committee had been "a bad mistake" that should not be considered binding.⁵⁶ Boen replied at length, noting that it "evidently makes some difference whose ox is gored" because Plowman favored A. R. McGill over Scheffer. But Boen stood unwilling to let the matter rest there. Anxious to vindicate himself, Boen two weeks

later had his supporters introduce a resolution near the end of the annual Alliance meeting to endorse Scheffer for governor. And after a heated exchange of words, the final vote upheld Boen, sustaining the resolution by a margin of nearly three to one.⁵⁷

Appearances proved deceiving when it came to Haldor Boen.⁵⁸ He held lesser offices--secretary of the local and state Alliances--and aimed in 1888 to run simply as a candidate for county register of deeds. For a politician Boen demonstrated little skill as a public speaker. His voice lacked volume, his words hardly varied in emphasis or pitch, and he shyly adhered self-consciously to his text. More serious, Boen rankled many by his ambitious, head-strong disposition and unwillingness either to brook opposition or readily take advice. But despite his faults, other qualities marked him for leadership among Norwegian-American agrarians. A farmer himself, his invigorating boldness mixed with quiet determination made him the personification of individual drive. A tall, rangy muscular figure of handsome appearance, with dark brown hair and mustache, Boen lived to exhaust himself every day, pulling together grit, stamina and resolve to fuel a tireless ambition and keep him a man alive only when he was on the move. He knew how to handle his countrymen, performing at his best in private conversations where, in uncommonly

correct English with only a slight Norwegian brogue, he expressed himself convincingly in an off-hand homespun fashion. Republican editor Elmer Adams, even when attempting to break Boen and the Populist-Alliance movement, acknowledged the Norwegian-American leader to be "possessed of both shrewdness and courage," a man who "does not usually pick a quarrel, but once in one is ready to fight."⁵⁹

The 1888 skirmish at the Alliance meeting anticipated battles to come. The first sign of trouble appeared in a bitter letter signed by "Spectator" in the local paper one week later. The writer sought to deny Boen the Republican nomination for county register of deeds by impugning the hard work and honest performance Boen had supposedly given to the Alliance. Boen, the writer accused, had undercut past Alliance candidates and made suspicious fence wire and twine deals for the Alliance during the previous season. To these statements, Boen promptly replied, saying he would be happy to furnish information about his twine and wire deals if the writer would reveal his name so that people "may understand the motive" of the writer's "spirited attack."⁶⁰

Notwithstanding the efforts of Boen's antagonists, nothing of substance resulted. At the 1888 Republican county convention, the Fergus Falls Weekly Journal

reported Boen was "so strong that the opposition against him [for register of deeds] amounted to but little."⁶¹ Alliacemen acquired their Republican nominations in the face of an apparent decline in the number of Alliances, but the numerous remaining Alliances, which were especially strong among the politically important Norwegian townships, still made the movement a force to be reckoned with. The critical point for a clash would not occur for two years.

V

The year 1890 determined the future course of the Otter Tail Farmers' Alliance movement. Alliacemen formed a separate political party, the county Republican party closed the door to any cooperation with it, and local Alliance, Democrat, and Prohibition forces united to effectively challenge Republican supremacy.

Throughout 1889 Minnesota's alliacemen had argued about what future course the organization ought to pursue. But by spring of 1890 the consensus favored establishing a new political party to field its own candidates and emphasize a wide range of farm-oriented issues.⁶²

Back in Otter Tail County, all wondered what action the County Alliance would take. The question animated political discussions throughout the month of May and

until the annual meeting of June 10. Republican newspapers, especially the Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, worked hard to talk the Alliance out of taking this step.⁶³ Elmer Adams, the Journal's editor, effectively marshalled arguments that mixed anger, coaxing, Republican pride, and efforts to foment internal divisions within the Alliance leadership. "If there are any," an exasperated Adams finally told nervous Republican candidates, "who prefer an alliance, prohibition, or democratic nomination to that of the Republican party, let them take it, but don't let a few malcontents of all parties wipe the Republican party around as if it were a dishrag." If the Alliance decides to field its own ticket, Adams declared, "it will not be forestalled by the Republican party prostrating itself before it."⁶⁴

The Fergus Falls Ugeblad, on the other hand, turned its back on what it termed "the Republican god." To teach Republican party leaders that the will of the people was not to be ignored, the Norwegian paper advised the Alliance to nominate its own county and legislative ticket. In reply, editor Adams of the Journal accused the Ugeblad of being "domineered by a few radical alliancemen" who are deaf to the fact that "there are other interests in Otter Tail County besides farming interests."⁶⁵ Then Adams pressed his attack along ethnic lines:

The Ugeblad also raises and discusses the nationality question and says that as blood is thicker than water countrymen will vote for countrymen. The Norwegians and Swedes have always had a fair representation in the offices. They have always had their full quota of county offices and when there were two [legislative] representatives they had one. Now when there are four they are fairly entitled to two. This does not seem to suit the Ugeblad. It seems to want four. It disposes of or ignores every one of the American candidates.⁶⁶

Editor Solem of the Ugeblad replied that he meant neither to complain about the Scandinavian's share of offices nor to ignore native-born candidates. "When we do not mention other American candidates," he said, "it is because we do not know of any, as we seldom have a chance to meet with Americans."⁶⁷

When Alliance members gathered on the morning of June 10, they had resolved to nominate their own slate of candidates, but uncertainty made them want to hedge their bets. After John Hompe's right-hand man, Swedish-born Charles Brandborg,⁶⁸ was unanimously elected president and the large number of Norwegian-American delegates easily elected Boen for secretary over two other candidates, attention turned to assembling a balanced slate of candidates who would attract votes from several ethnic and political interests. How much convention politics was strictly Norwegian or ethnic based is difficult to say because these feelings cannot easily be separated from those of personality, issues and factions. Whatever its overall

extent, it most visibly showed itself in selecting candidates. Norwegian-Americans received their due recognition for state representative: delegates renominated an incumbent from the north-central Norwegian settlements of the county and nominated a young school teacher from the Norwegian settlements to the northwest. As for the county Alliance leaders, John Hompe won by acclamation the nomination for state senator and Haldor Boen easily secured renomination for register of deeds.⁶⁹

Although the Alliance had now gone ahead with its own slate of candidates, its leaders remained troubled about the movement's prospects for victory. Reportedly Boen and Hompe, two 1888 Republican incumbents, had only reluctantly favored a separate ticket out of fear that Republicans might oppose their new political effort rather than try to arrange some accommodation to it.

Their fears were not unfounded. The next issue of Elmer Adams' Weekly Journal flatly rejected accommodation:

No man should be placed upon the Republican ticket who is not a Republican and will not support the Republican ticket. Close up the ranks that we may know who is for us and who is against us.⁷⁰

Within a few days, four Republicans who had received Alliance nominations for county office penned letters refusing the honor.⁷¹

Apprehensive indecision now visited Alliance leaders. What arrangements should now be made for the four positions?

Though distasteful to some like president Charles Brandborg, Haldor Boen now believed their only choice lay in combining with other parties.⁷² So, over the succeeding days, Boen quietly negotiated a new coalition ticket with the Democratic and Prohibition forces.⁷³ When completed, three Democrats and one Prohibitionist replaced the Alliance nominations vacated by the four Republicans.⁷⁴

The Republicans, their bluff called, immediately concentrated on ridiculing the "combination" ticket for deemphasizing principles in order to gain office and to keep their coalition from splitting apart. The Democratic county platform "is strangely silent on the liquor question," chided a typical Journal editorial, adding that "this is to enable the prohibitionists to stand on it."⁷⁵

But Republicans nevertheless felt the tide of opinion running strongly against them and serious losses seemed imminent. Compounding their troubles, the Republican Congress in October had passed the McKinley Tariff. This act touched a raw nerve among spring wheat farmers trying to sell their produce in an unprotected world market while paying for goods and supplies at protected rates. Word of the new measure quickly spread. "As soon as the McKinley bill was passed," observed the editor of the Battle Lake Review, "some merchants seized upon it as a

handle for advertising purposes. Newspaper columns bristled . . . with . . . 'Prices going up on account of the increase in Tariff. Buy now before the rise.'"⁷⁶ In his final pre-election issue of the Weekly Journal, Elmer Adams pleaded to voters to "think a second time before you leave the Republican party to which you have always belonged."⁷⁷ But Norwegian-American and other farmers had already made up their minds. A full week before the election, the unmistakable direction of the political winds led an Alliance candidate to rejoice in his letter to the County Alliance president, "Good News!!! Our ticket is solid in Blowers and Bluffton, Finlanders, Norwegians, Germans, Americans and everything."⁷⁸

Voters elected the entire coalition ticket, thus ending fifteen years of uninterrupted Republican rule in the county. Norwegian precincts reversed their voting patterns--shifting from the Republican to the Alliance party (refer Table 4). They did not, moreover, vote simply for Alliance regulars while scratching Catholic Democrats and Prohibition candidates on the "combination" ticket. Rather, they gave almost identical majorities to all. The same held true for heavily German precincts, which supported the coalition county ticket down the line while voting Democratic for the state candidates. Now it was the Republicans turn to complain about the evils of

Table 4

Republican Share of Vote for Governor
By Rural Ethnic Sources of Previous
Party Support, 1888-1896
In Otter Tail County^a

Predominate ethnicity of townships	1888 %	1890 %	1892 %	1894 %	1896 %
Norwegian	59.5	8.5	29.5	21.2	21.5
Swedish	67.4	22.1	43.9	46.7	36.8
Native-born	61.7	46.5	50.8	40.8	48.1
Finnish	55.4	42.6	39.8	48.3	63.4

^aThe thirteen predominantly Norwegian townships used for this tabulation included: Oscar, Trondhjem, Norwegian Grove, Aastad, Aurdal, Dane Prairie, Tumuli, Sverdrup, Tordenskjold, St. Olaf, Everts, Nidaros, and Folden. Swedish townships were Amor and Eastern. Native-born precincts were Inman, Maine and Ottertail townships. Finnish precincts included Blowers, Deer Creek, Newton and Paddock townships.

nationality voting, as the Journal did in its post-election review:

The Scandinavian towns[hips] have voted solidly for the alliance ticket, as the returns from such towns[hips] as Trondhjem and Sverdrup show. In this contest voters have not stopped to consider the merits of the candidates, so that good men have run no better than poor ones.⁷⁹

A county realignment had resulted. But although traditionally Republican farm precincts all registered declines, the Republican vote especially plummeted in Norwegian strongholds followed by losses in townships of predominantly Swedish, native-born and Finnish populations.⁸⁰

Rural Norwegian townships, throughout the 1890's, provided the core of support for Alliance and subsequent Populist party candidates in Otter Tail County. As the largest single nationality group, their consistent agrarian militancy determined the course of farmer insurgency in the county. As Table 5 suggests, Swedish townships also gave majorities, but proved somewhat less willing to abandon the Republican party. Weaker agrarian party support came from predominantly native-born farm localities. More vacillating in their sentiments, they responded somewhat to Alliance/Populist candidates on the state ticket, but gave less support to candidates of the Norwegian dominated County Alliance party. Finnish precincts consistently gave more votes to Republican than Alliance/Populist candidates, but tended generally to

Table 5

Agricultural Protest Parties' Share of the Vote for Governor
By Various Units of Otter Tail County, 1890-1896^a

	1890 Farmers Alliance Percent	1892 Populist Percent	1894 Populist Percent	1896 Pop./Demo. Percent	Average 1890-1896 Percent
Norwegian	89.0	55.7	68.9	73.2	72.3
Swedish	75.2	45.6	50.7	63.2	58.5
Native-born	42.7	25.7	53.5	50.5	45.0
Finnish	40.5	21.4	39.8	33.9	33.4
German	13.4	8.5	30.3	62.4	30.1
City of Fergus Falls	28.6	16.4	40.7	52.2	36.7
Entire County	54.4	33.1	49.1	58.7	49.9

^aThe thirteen predominantly Norwegian precincts used for this tabulation are identified in footnote 40; Swedish precincts were Amor and Eastern Townships; Native-born precincts were Inman, Maine and Ottertail Townships; Finnish precincts included Blowers, Deer Creek, Newton and Paddock Townships; and German precincts were Corliss, Edna, Effington, and Perham Township and Village plus Dead Lake Township. The 1895 Minnesota state census schedules provided the data to locate ethnic concentrations and the Legislative Manual of the State of Minnesota provided the election results.

scatter their votes among the major parties more than other groups. As for Germans, hardly a Catholic or Lutheran farmer joined and participated in the Farmers' Alliance or Peoples party causes, but instead remained loyal to the Democrats. Only when local Democrats negotiated a coalition to assemble the county ticket did the Alliance/Populist parties make gains in the traditionally Democratic German precincts. Quite surprisingly, between 1890 and 1896, voters in the City of Fergus Falls cast an average one-third of their ballots for Alliance and Populist gubernatorial candidates. Upon closer inspection, however, indications are that once again Norwegians contributed most to this county seat trend. The combined votes of the first and fourth wards, where lived the most Norwegians, averaged nearly 12 percentage points higher than did that of the second and third wards.⁸¹

VI

As Norwegian-American voting strength moved solidly behind the new party, state and county events after 1890 suggested a melancholy fate for Alliance politics. Internal upheavals at the state level had by 1890 shifted control to Alliancemen antagonistic to Ignatius Donnelly's influence. Leaders of the anti-Donnelly faction who dominated the Alliance party's state central committee,

had managed the gubernatorial campaign of Sidney M. Owen in 1890. But after Owen's defeat, Donnelly seized the initiative and within two months, overwhelmingly won his campaign for the presidency of the party's parent organization, the Farmers' Alliance. The state central committee still held tight rein over the political arm of the movement--the Alliance party--but Donnelly deftly neutralized its power over the next few months. This happened when the national People's party drew its first breath in Cincinnati and invested Donnelly's delegates instead of his rivals with the honor to organize the new party in Minnesota. With this in hand, he stood well positioned to merge the Farmers' Alliance into his new People's party, leaving Minnesota's Alliance party isolated and ineffectual.⁸² Donnelly's opponents resolved to not take this challenge lying down, but, recognizing their severely weakened position, tried all measures short of a formal break to hold onto some independence and some future voice in People's party affairs.

Otter Tail's Alliance state senator, John B. Hompe, had emerged as a leader of those opposing Donnelly after becoming disgusted with Donnelly's legislative machinations during the 1891 session. Hardly had Ignatius Donnelly returned from the Cincinnati convention when Hompe succeeded in getting the Fifth Congressional District

convention of the Alliance to resolve that it would only "cooperate with the People's party through the state central committee of the Alliance Party. . . ." ⁸³ But the assumption of equal standing between the Alliance and People's parties no longer carried force. By May of 1892, with the adroit Donnelly having sidestepped all confrontations, the Alliance party lay in an advanced state of decay and most were ready to join the new People's party. Only the Otter Tail Alliance organization, or what little remained of it, later tried to put forth candidates in 1892, but attracted embarrassingly few votes. ⁸⁴

Given Hompe's opposition, Donnelly's new party faced dim prospects in Otter Tail County. But then a single event opened the way: the climactic resolution of a bitter personal struggle in 1891 between Charles Brandborg and Haldor Boen that drove Boen and his Norwegian-American followers from the county Alliance. Circumstances surrounding the 1891 annual County Alliance meeting brought about Boen's resignation and publicized the factional battle.

Hompe nominated his loyal friend, Charles Brandborg, to remain as president of the County Alliance and this unanimously carried without opposition. Boen, however, found challengers for his position as secretary. G. O. Greeley (a Brandborg and Hompe man) and another

candidate were placed against him. Although Boen led Greeley by eleven of the seventy-three ballots cast, no candidate received a majority. But when the third candidate then withdrew in favor of Boen, Greeley lost by twelve votes. Brandborg waited until all quieted down and then stood to announce:

A year ago you elected Mr. Boen and myself to serve as your secretary and president for the next year. Now there is no secret about the fact that good feeling does not exist between Mr. Boen and myself; we have not been in harmony for some time past. When we were elected last year the time was an important and critical one for the Alliance, and for the good of the cause . . . I did not feel justified in handing in my resignation. I suppressed my personal feelings for the sake of the Alliance . . . but now there is no fight on hand, and I will not do it again. I will not--I cannot--serve by the side of Mr. Boen again. For these reasons I now tender my preemptory resignation from the office of president.⁸⁵

Momentary silence filled the hall as members looked toward Boen to see his reaction. A conciliator then insisted that both men honor the vote of the majority and remain in their elected offices, and he mildly reprimanded Brandborg for bringing such disputes into the meeting. Hompe also urged Brandborg and Boen to work together despite their differences. But "we can't let Boen have everything," exclaimed the defeated candidate G. O. Greeley; "we have got to fight him a little, you know, though we can't do nothing."⁸⁶

Somewhat embarrassed, Brandborg reiterated his feelings, but by that point Boen had listened enough. Quickly standing, he expressed amazement at this turn of events. Pointing out how the secretary amounted to a dray horse that did all the work and insisting that he had not been a burden on the organization, Boen showed growing irritation:

. . . why then am I attacked? It may be for private reasons, for personal reasons that I do not care to discuss now; it may be partly for nationality reasons [Brandborg was of Swedish birth and Boen, Norwegian]. I am a very independent man; a privileged American citizen, and I do not bow the head to any man, however dictatorial he may be; perhaps this is my offense. At any rate I shall not now resign, as I thought I might do when I rose to my feet. . . .⁸⁷

A brief burst of applause greeted Boen as he sat down. To give the atmosphere a chance to cool, members called a fifteen minute recess, which was then extended further while a conciliation committee worked to resolve the matter. At the end, Boen played the martyr's role, making a humble but sarcastic speech of resignation in the interest of harmony and keeping such an "invaluable" man as Brandborg in the president's chair.⁸⁸

The Brandborg-Hompe group gained a temporary advantage by Boen's ouster. But unknowingly, Brandborg's actions had sowed the seeds of their eventual defeat. Ignatius Donnelly's Populist party needed popular local leaders unaligned with his opponents to capture both this

county and the rest of the congressional district--the citidel of farmers' movement strength. And in a disaffected Boen, Donnelly found the most aggressive leader possible to fashion a new Populist structure.

But this is to get ahead of the story. A good deal of resentment lingered among Boen's supporters during the weeks following the convention clash. It contributed to an unfortunate incident during the Fourth of July celebration at Henning. Before the day ended, Ole Anderson, a twenty-five-year-old Swede lay dead--accidentally killed by the president of the County Alliance, Charles Brandborg. Too much beer and whiskey, the Fergus Falls Journal concluded, had been at the bottom of it all.⁸⁹

As part of its festivities, the Alliance had erected a stage from which various addresses were being given. A drunken supporter, embittered about his leader's ouster, persistently harrassed one of the speakers and, at Brandborg's insistence, the heckler had been arrested and jailed.⁹⁰ A crowd gathered outside the jail and, when Brandborg happened to pass by, they surged toward him urging the man's release. Brandborg refused and, becoming alarmed by the rather unruly crowd, warned them to stand back. When one man moved towards him the powerfully built, two-hundred-pound Brandborg knocked him out with a blow from his fist. As all waited for the man to

revive, the crowd turned ugly. Brandborg started for home but many followed and several began to throw stones at him. Brandborg seized a rail to protect himself. Swinging it once, he narrowly missed one man. But swinging it again he caught a young Swede squarely on the side of the head and he crumpled to the ground. As Brandborg hurried home, men in the crowd carried the unconscious man back to town where he died shortly thereafter.⁹¹

Controversy ensued. Brandborg's enemies claimed that the whole thing would not have taken place had not the Alliance president angered people by his offensive, dictatorial and tactless manner.⁹² Defenders stoutly insisted that Brandborg was being unjustly maligned, with John Hompe reportedly saying that "We must stand by Charlie."⁹³ Although all charges were dropped after a court hearing, the publicity heightened public emotions. One Brandborg follower particularly aroused ethnic tension when he retaliated in a letter describing the slain Swede as a "poor, ignorant devil" whose life had been taken by a "free American club."⁹⁴

Demoralized, Charles Brandborg withdrew from his presidency of the Hompe faction's newspaper, the Henning Alliance Advocate, and in May, 1892 he refused another term as president of the County Alliance.⁹⁵ But John Hompe had no intention of giving up. He enlivened

politics during early 1892 in several articles lambasting Ignatius Donnelly's motives and behavior in the 1891 legislature. Not to be outdone, Donnelly counterattacked with several articles of his own.⁹⁶ But despite Hompe's attempts to deny further honors to Donnelly's new party, his hope that Otter Tail County could lead a successful statewide party revolt quickly fizzled.⁹⁷

In January, 1892 Haldor Boen re-emerged--this time as organizer of the Populist party, not only for the county but for the entire Seventh Congressional District as well. The new assignment had come after Boen publicized a recommended plan of campaign for the upcoming year that identified Donnelly as the man who should be the next President of the United States. The political turnabout, as Adams of the Journal phrased it, had lifted Boen "out of the suds where the other fellows thought they had him and put him into the saddle. This knocks the alliance committee, of which Mr. Brandborg is chairman, into the soup, unless an effort is made to keep the Otter Tail alliance out of the People's party."⁹⁸

Boen took steps to prevent that eventuality. As Donnelly would later do, Boen sought not to quash his opponents but to bring the discordant elements together once again, beseeching them "to bury their differences, forget their misunderstandings of the past and stand

shoulder to shoulder" under the new banner of Populism. Subjugation would gain him nothing while conciliation might bring public support both for the new party and for his own effort to win nomination for a seat in Congress. In line with this plan, Boen announced in March the names of those he proposed to include on his Otter Tail county central committee. His list contained representatives of most political groups including the leader of the Alliance opposition, John Hompe.⁹⁹

"We do not recognize that Mr. Boen had any right to act in this matter," said one spokesman upon leaving a hastily called meeting of Hompe's faction, and we "don't propose to have any bosses take our power away from us."¹⁰⁰ But then over the next several weeks, waning confidence and John Hompe's announced retirement from what he termed "political struggles" further weakened the pro-Alliance faction, despite efforts of the Ugeblad and Alliance Advocate to buoy the dying Alliance cause.¹⁰¹

By a May 19 meeting of the County Alliance, nearly all stood ready to accept Boen's People's party as the legitimate heir to the Alliance party. Some disgruntled Alliancesmen wanted to try and discredit Boen's past handling of County Alliance treasury funds, but Brandborg ended that--reminding them that a previous investigation had satisfactorily settled the matter. John Hompe

delivered a final plea deploring the impending merger and the desire of a few to be bosses, but resignedly told Alliancemen that he would go along with their decision. By early afternoon delegates formally gave the party over to the new People's party and unanimously elected Boen's new executive committee to represent them.¹⁰²

Charles Brandborg took the whole matter well, joking that all those who had predicted a big fight here ought "to give up the role of political prophets."¹⁰³ But John Hompe accepted things in a less forgiving spirit. When the new county central committee met in Haldor Boen's office following the Alliance meeting, they had just fixed the date of the upcoming county People's party convention and the form of delegate representation when Hompe interrupted. Referring to Boen's description of their new body as the county committee of the People's party, he asked if this committee in any way recognized the state Farmers' Alliance party central committee (the anti-Donnelly campaign committee). When told that of course it did not and could not, Hompe said, "Then, I must decline to serve as one of its members," and got up and walked out of the room, disregarding a colleague's protest about quibbling over words.¹⁰⁴

Delegates to the People's party county convention met three weeks later. Most comprised farmers from the

Norwegian-American townships with scarcely any Germans or native-born Americans present.¹⁰⁵ Nominations, with but two exceptions, went to the same incumbent officeholders elected by the Alliance party in 1890. Members also unanimously approved a delegation to the Seventh District Congressional convention pledged to Haldor Boen for Congress.¹⁰⁶

One week later when convention delegates met at Moorhead, Minnesota, most expected that the candidate would come from either Otter Tail or Polk counties--the two largest in the district. State senator Edwin E. Lommen fought Boen for the honor but lost when his divided following failed to coalesce behind his candidacy.¹⁰⁷

Haldor Boen now stood as head of the county and district central committees of the People's party and his political fortunes never looked brighter. Success had not come easy to him and disappointment and personal disaster had darkened nearly every achievement. Political prospects that seemed bright back in 1884 when he helped organize the Otter Tail County Alliance blackened when the death of two sons tragically cut short his effort to canvass the county for support. The children had walked out on thin ice to pick rushes and fell through, drowning in only a few feet of water. Six years later, tragedy struck again just after he had negotiated the 1890 "combination" ticket with

Democrats and Prohibitionists. His fourteen year old son, in driving to town with a load of hay, fell beneath the wheels of the wagon which passed over his neck and killed him. This second loss to his family of nine children reportedly left Haldor "nearly wild with grief."¹⁰⁸

Politically Boen had lost the Alliance endorsement for state representative in 1884, been denied a Republican nomination for register of deeds in 1886, and met subsequent defeat as an independent candidate. And, of course, he had felt the bitterness of forced resignation in 1891 from his long held post as secretary of the County Alliance. He was persistent, indeed, but other qualities had handicapped his career. "No one regrets more than I do," said Boen, "my lack of ability as a public speaker. It is unfortunate for myself and often very embarrassing to my friends."¹⁰⁹ For although he excelled in private conversation, large groups seemed to erode Boen's self-confidence and reduce him to speaking in a way that reminded one man of a youthful clergyman offering prayer.¹¹⁰

But now immediate problems beset Boen during the 1892 campaign. The victorious challenge waged by Boen and Donnelly for leadership had demoralized and disunited the forces of reform. Also, the local Democratic party organization in 1892 lay ruptured, split in two over fusion

with the People's party, and debilitating infighting between Farmers' Alliance and People's party forces had left many farmers bewildered and dispirited.¹¹¹ While concerned that these might erode Populist pluralities at the polls, Boen hoped that his core of Norwegian voting strength would see him through. But here, the editor of the Fergus Falls Ugeblad directly threatened these chances by rejecting Boen's People's party. Whether or not this would destroy Boen's prospects for victory remained a major question.

Anfin Solem's Ugeblad circulated fifteen hundred issues weekly to Norwegian-American readers throughout Otter Tail and adjoining counties. Although devoting much of its space to religious and literary matters, the paper also commented on county and state politics, which made it a considerable political force. Solem had advocated a separate Alliance party back in 1888 and when it finally emerged in 1890 the Fergus Falls Journal described the "normally conservative paper" as having become "fairly frenzied" over the reform movement.¹¹² But when the split occurred in Alliance ranks, the Ugeblad's editor vigorously took up the defense of Hompe and Brandborg's pro-Alliance cause against Boen and Donnelly. To the editor, Ignatius Donnelly seemed an unreliable leader unworthy of public confidence. As for Boen, the highly principled Solem found

him to be "a politician from the top of his head to the tip of his toe, and like almost all such, he is not altogether too particular about the principle if only his plans can be carried out." Though respecting his courage and perseverance, Solem believed it "against the reform party's first principles to promote such a man" as Boen who "has always been an office seeker."¹¹³ Elmer Adams of the Journal thought the disagreement went far deeper, however:

What the starting point was which led Mr. Boen and the editor of the Ugeblad in different directions is not known, but if we were to make a guess, it would be their differences on religious questions. The editor of the Ugeblad, trained as he has been from childhood in certain beliefs, is orthodox to the core. Mr. Boen is an extremist in the opposite direction. . . . To Mr. Solem's mind, Mr. Boen's views are extremely harmful and it is but natural to expect that they should wind their way in different directions.¹¹⁴

Whatever the reasons, by late July the Ugeblad's anti-Boen and anti-Donnelly campaign had surfaced.¹¹⁵ Although Boen knew that the Ugeblad's opposition to him would also cost the paper some influence, he could not be sure how much damage Solem might do.¹¹⁶ When he wrote to Donnelly the last week of July, Boen seemed preoccupied with Solem's Ugeblad. After stating he did not know how much truth there was to reports that farmers were going back on them, Boen continued:

The truth is that this is not a "Donnelly County," whatever that means, and the chief opposition to

myself according to Mr. Solem is that I am "too much of a Donnelly man."

So I think both of us will have a harder struggle and perhaps fare worse in this county, than anywhere else in this district.

Mr. Bjorge the president of the County Alliance informs me that the Ugeblad will support the legislative and county ticket of the People's party but that it will pound "Donnelly and Boen."

I expected that he would support the whole ticket or nothing with the exception of myself.¹¹⁷

As expected, in the first week of August editor Solem announced his backing of Norwegian-born Knute Nelson for governor against Ignatius Donnelly. Likewise the editor declared his support for Republican Henry Feig, of German parentage, for Congress against Haldor Boen.¹¹⁸

By mid-September Boen's mounting concern about inadequate newspaper support led him to sound out other People's party/Democratic/Prohibition county candidates about whether to start a newspaper on their behalf. A new propaganda sheet never materialized, however, since most indicated that the Ugeblad had treated them fairly and only reacted unfavorable to Boen.¹¹⁹

In hopes of further obstructing and killing off Populist candidates at the polls, John Hompe in late September called a mass County Alliance meeting at Henning, which mainly selected candidates already nominated by the other major parties. Against Boen, for instance, those who attended endorsed the Republican candidate for Congress, Henry Feig.¹²⁰

Owing to the county's unsettled politics, Boen rarely got out to campaign in the district where few knew him. Consumed with trying to protect earlier won gains at home, no sooner did he seem to carefully construct one political fence before opponents tore down another.¹²¹ But despite his inattention to other parts of the district, Boen's effort to prevent anticipated wholesale losses in Otter Tail County paid off.

Notwithstanding the Ugeblad, the Republicans, and John Hompe's pro-Alliance party endorsements, Boen nearly obtained a plurality in the county, being only 112 votes shy of that received by Henry Feig, the Republican candidate. And favorable majorities elsewhere made Haldor Boen the next congressman from the Seventh District. Polk, Marshall and Kittson counties provided the key pluralities that brought him a narrow victory of 165 votes.¹²² "I pulled through--through a small knot hole," Boen wrote to Donnelly. "It was a tight squeeze but I am mighty glad it was not tighter."¹²³

The Ugeblad's political influence turned out to be limited. The paper had favored Feig, the Republican, instead of Boen. Yet the strongly Norwegian precincts gave an average of only 19 percent of their votes to Feig compared to 62 percent to Boen. Assuming that the Ugeblad circulated papers to roughly the same proportion of people

in the Norwegian townships, then the steeply varied township votes must mean that local leadership, loyalties and prejudices counted for more than press opinion. Five of thirteen Norwegian precincts denied Boen a majority of their votes while five others bestowed two-thirds of theirs to him. At one extreme, Boen attracted only 25 percent of the votes cast in Dane Prairie Township while 92 percent of the voters favored him in Folden and Trondhjem townships. Nevertheless, one would have still expected the Ugeblad's endorsement of the popular Republican, Knute Nelson, for governor to have easily swung the Norwegian precincts into line. Even here, however, seven of the thirteen precincts cast majorities not for their Norwegian countryman, but for Donnelly, a Populist of Irish-Catholic background. Although the Ugeblad undoubtedly was a factor of importance, the strength of Boen's political organization and his impressive personality apparently predominated in Norwegian strongholds.

Winning the congressional seat marked a new high point in Haldor Boen's public career. By shrewdly manipulating the authority of Donnelly's new party, Boen had absorbed the Farmers' Alliance party into his new Populist organization and led a fully committed following to the district convention. A weak base supported these successes,

however, one that demanded Boen's constant attention to keep it from crumbling away. Boen's earlier invitation to the weakly committed, the openly antagonistic, and all other office seekers to join his new party had avoided an open split in the county farmer's movement. But this proved costly as soon as Populism fell on more difficult days.

VII

Congressman Haldor Boen served in Washington during times when the depression of 1893 shook the country, so intensifying agricultural and industrial unrest that nationwide turmoil threatened. By midsummer of 1893 some of the nation's largest railroads had fallen into receivership. Banks everywhere fought to stay afloat by calling in their business and individual loans, and banks in rural sections toppled one after another. In Otter Tail County, relations deteriorated between the county seat banks and farmers. Editor Frank Hoskins of the Henning Alliance Advocate, faced trial and commitment to the state mental hospital for a few weeks after being charged with criminal libel against a Fergus Falls bank. He had advised depositor withdrawals after alleging three Fergus banks to be insolvent.¹²⁴ But upon his release, Hoskins and former County Alliance president, Charles

Brandborg, went about the townships delivering speeches claiming usurious practices by the banks.¹²⁵ They argued or implied, partly by citing Biblical references, that farmers should not have to pay on notes they owed the Fergus Falls banks because the banks charged unjust interest rates. Their speeches prompted the event known as the "Folden farmers' affair." Fifty farmers of the Farmers' Alliance in Folden, a nearly solid Norwegian township near Henning, took action in March of 1894. They signed a paper pledging to resist payments on their notes and repudiated their debts. Three of the farmers even escaped briefly to Canada with some property mortgaged as chattel security on loans. The editor of the Republican Fergus Falls Journal quickly capitalized on the matter, linking the Populist cause with anarchism.¹²⁶

Boen and other Populists tried to disassociate their party from the actions of Hoskins and Brandborg. The Fergus Falls Rodhuggeren, owned substantially by Haldor Boen and now the principal Norwegian language newspaper in the county, asserted that the two ill-tempered eccentrics could not be Populists because they used their speeches primarily to attack People's party leaders.¹²⁷ After hearing one of Hoskin's talks, the strongly Populist editor of the Rodhuggeren declared:

It was Boen he was after principally. He also criticized [Populist] County Treasurer Hans Nelson

for not withdrawing the county funds out of the Fergus Banks last summer, thereby forcing them to close their doors. He wanted the People's party congressman [Boen] to . . . work wholly and solely for one object only, i.e., "The subtreasury bill." If they did not do that they were traitors to their party and should be replaced by men who would do it.¹²⁸

If staunch Republicans became disturbed by the Folden affair or the class strife accompanying the Great Northern Railway strike of 1894, Haldor Boen's controversial record in Congress hardly encouraged their tranquility.¹²⁹ In keeping with his radical temperament, Boen proposed drastic political and economic reforms to cope with the troubled depression years.¹³⁰ Owing to the shrinking per capita stock of money in circulation, for example, he introduced a bill to expend a billion dollars of irredemable currency on public works. Another bill proposed to reduce by 25 percent the pay of government officeholders, on the grounds that those responsible for the ruinous deflationary conditions ought not reap the advancing purchasing power that their fixed incomes gave them. Yet another of his bills called for all deposits of public money to be withdrawn from national banks and kept in the national treasury. But Boen's most controversial act came when he introduced a joint resolution directing the War Department to provide tents and provisions to Jacob Coxey's famous "army" of unemployed industrial workers who marched on Washington--making their futile plea for national public works

before being arrested for trespassing on the Capitol grounds.

Because of Boen's narrow victory in 1892 and the uncertain direction of politics in the district, the Republican national committee concluded that the congressman could be successfully challenged. Acting on his presumed vulnerability, they devoted considerable attention, financial and otherwise, to defeating him.¹³¹ Frank M. Eddy, who had been Pope County's clerk of district court since 1885, received the Republican nomination and the Journal's editor, Elmer Adams--known as "one of the shrewdest political managers and manipulators in the state"--took charge of the campaign.¹³²

The residue of past factional bitterness spun rumors that Congressman Boen might fail to secure renomination even in his own county. But these subsided after the annual Farmers' Alliance meeting in June endorsed both his course in Congress and his re-election in November. At the People's party convention in mid-July, Boen's friends easily saw to it that an Otter Tail delegation, instructed to support Boen's re-election bid, went to the Seventh District convention, thereby making his renomination certain. Also the county convention decided against further coalescing with the severely weakened local Democratic or Prohibition parties, insisting instead that their candidates

pledge to uphold the Omaha Platform and forsake all other party endorsements. Furthermore, the Populist delegates backed off from previous leanings toward prohibition and declared instead their willingness to accept a controlled liquor traffic.¹³³

But even though Boen's men had managed matters, the Congressman himself committed a careless political blunder that eventually would be his undoing. Whether from overconfidence or inattention to county matters, he gave to others his chairmanship over both the county party organization and the county central committee, thereby relinquishing personal political control. Chairman Boen appointed Charles F. Hanson (the clerk of court) and Charlie Smith (the candidate for state representative) to serve with eight others on the county central committee.¹³⁴ As it happened, the two men would in 1896 use the power of this committee as a wedge to dislodge and topple Boen from leadership.

Boen's vigorous Populistic organ, the Rodhuggeren, proved his main source of Norwegian press support in the district. The Nye Normander in Moorhead deserted him to aid the Prohibition candidate and so did Anfin Solem's Ugeblad. Solem dismissed the People's party county convention as the "Boen convention" and the candidates as the "Boen ticket," throwing his support instead to the

Prohibitionists even though he favored temperance over prohibition principles.¹³⁵

Republicans and Populists alike sensed this to be a much closer contest than either of the two previous ones. Charles Hanson, whom the Journal's Republican editor termed "the most astute and skillful worker in the People's party in the county," strenuously labored with his protégé Charlie Smith to blunt the Republican offensive. Hanson and Smith were "running the party," noted the Journal's editor, and trying hard "to whip the people into line."¹³⁶ No wonder; by October the Republicans, noted another editor, were "turning heaven and hades to defeat the ticket."¹³⁷

As the campaign moved into its final days, the Journal grew increasingly shrill. Editor Adams launched a fresh attack on Boen, dragging forward the congressman's religious views and assailing his record in Congress. "If Mr. Boen does not believe in a God, personal or otherwise, in a hell or heaven, that is his right," said Adams, for "religious liberty is one of the foundation stones of our federal constitution."¹³⁸ But he had nevertheless made his point. As for the Populist leader's achievements, Adams declared that "no man ever in congress in one session had introduced more absurd, ridiculous, pernicious measures than he. . . . His bill to print \$2,000,000 irredeemable

paper money is sure to scare capital out of the district as long as he sits in congress. It is difficult enough to get an eastern man to loan money on a Park Region and Red River Valley farm. . . ."139

Despite Populist counterattacks, voters that year seemed less susceptible to agrarian agitation. Election returns showed that Otter Tail Republicans had checked the People's party momentum. Several offices went to Republicans and those Populists who succeeded in the county races won by margins far thinner than before.¹⁴⁰

Even more significantly, Haldor Boen lost his bid for Congress. He had carried his own county as well as that of the six Red River Valley counties that had given him majorities in 1892. But this time, instead of repeating another narrow victory, he suffered a narrow defeat by 800 votes out of nearly 42,000 cast. The Otter Tail County vote for Boen, whether out of respect for his radical independence or as a reaction to harsh Republican tactics, increased to 39 percent compared to 33 percent in 1892. In Norwegian precincts, the Congressman's vote had declined slightly. A strong majority of 57 percent stood behind him, but this had dropped 4 percentage points since 1892. Once again, considerable variation existed--six of thirteen heavily Norwegian precincts withheld majorities from Boen while five others mustered two-thirds or more of their

votes on his behalf. Perhaps due to the Ugeblad, whose editor favored a prohibition candidate to succeed Boen, Norwegian precincts increased their prohibitionist vote by an average 9 percentage points from that of two years before.

His hopes for victory shattered, Boen played the martyr in an address published in the Rodhuggeren:

Election is over and I lost. The people lost. But since I . . . received at least 4,000 votes more this time than at last election I regard it as approval of my work in congress. The monied men in general did not like that I voted for the free coinage of silver and against the Sherman law; nor did they like that I proposed that the government should issue one billion dollars, full legal tender treasury notes, and put them in circulation by building railways, erecting needed public buildings and improving rivers and harbors.

But Foss [of the Nye Normanden], Solem [of the Ugeblad and others] . . . could not defeat the Populist candidate. . . . Other means must be employed. Saloon keepers, lawyers, machine agents, toughs of all kinds took a hand against us.¹⁴¹

Opposition newspapers in the region gleefully pounced on his bitter statement, wondering wryly how "monied men" had defeated Boen in an area where farmers constituted over 90 percent of the voters.¹⁴²

The ex-congressman, alone with defeat and heavily in debt, returned from Washington the first week of April. Now divorced--his marriage of eighteen years having fallen victim to congressional success--Haldor found a house in Fergus Falls and attended to his farm at Aurdal.¹⁴³

As Boen sulked, pondering past setbacks and future possibilities, the years 1895 and 1896 witnessed steady local Populist consolidation under Charles Hanson that slowly shunted Haldor Boen from the inner circles of political planning. By fall of 1895 Boen realized his political interests must be revitalized if he were to maintain his standing in the party and so he purchased the poorly performing Fergus Globe for \$350.¹⁴⁴ This gave him an English language vehicle with which to praise his supporters and castigate those who had fought him for Congress. "He was not able to punish his friends fast enough with his [Rodhuggeren] Norwegian paper," jeered Elmer Adams, "so now he will try them with both languages at the same time." He added that "it is understood that a Unitarian monthly will also be started so that advanced religion as well as advanced politics will be disseminated."¹⁴⁵

Those expecting greater editorializing and a more enthusiastic Populist organ were not disappointed. Sparks flew in February when at a banquet Boen made disparaging remarks to a visiting military man about maintaining a standing army. This brought down on Boen's head the wrath of a locally prominent Civil War veteran, who maligned the Norwegian-American politician as "a foreigner who either stole or begged his citizenship in the country of his

adoption."¹⁴⁶ And in March when Boen saw political motives behind railroad magnate James J. Hill's invitation for seventy Otter Tail farmers to visit the State Experimental Farm, editor Adams could not resist noting that "It seems to be the purpose of not only Boen but his ring of office seekers to keep the people as moss-covered as possible so that by appealing to their prejudices they can continue themselves in office."¹⁴⁷

By spring of 1896, however, control over the local Populist party began to overshadow other issues. Boen's adversary, Charles Hanson, was a thirty-nine-year-old Norwegian-American of Fergus Falls. In 1883, after having received a business education in Norway, Hanson had immigrated to Otter Tail County and worked in the county auditor's office until joining Boen's new Populist party in 1892. Intense and energetic, Hanson achieved election as clerk of court in 1892 and also in the next two successive elections. Persons who knew him described Hanson as an astute, courteous, efficient and plain man who expressed his opinions in a clear, cordial manner.¹⁴⁸ In due course, however, after having known one another for many years, he and Boen split in 1896--Hanson becoming acknowledged leader of the "fusionist" wing of the party and Boen the defender of "mid-road Populism." Boen commanded a majority of popular support among Norwegian-American farmers while

Hanson controlled the county Populist machinery through the county central committee.

Boen's popularity with the general electorate posed a problem to Hanson for which he had no immediate solution. He recognized the truth of the Journal's statement that Haldor Boen "understands how to handle men, and particularly his countrymen who practically make up the Populist party in this county. He knows the ins and outs of every township; he knows the men who control."¹⁴⁹

Charles Hanson and his friends concluded that to protect themselves and their present political arrangements, they would need to get the jump on Haldor Boen by scheduling the county Populist convention early. But Boen seemed already out in front. Ordinarily the county central committee, which Hanson controlled, called its convention only after members of the Seventh Congressional District committee set the date for the district convention and announced the number of delegates for each county to send. Boen held the advantage here because his friends controlled the Seventh District committee. Of course, he could postpone things only so long, since county conventions had to precede state and national conventions. Still, despite criticism from about the district, Boen managed to hold things off until late May, when he scheduled the Seventh District committee to meet June 3 at Fergus Falls.¹⁵⁰

This move to buy time exasperated the Hanson forces and they saw their chances for success jeopardized unless they acted at once. Calling together members of the People's Party county central committee, they made two shrewd political moves. First, Hanson's committee decided to force Boen's hand by announcing that the date of the county convention would be June 23, 1896, two days before the Republican county convention. Caught off guard, Boen commented that "this is rather hasty action in view of the fact that the district committee meets here on the third day of June."¹⁵¹ But second, and far more important, they ingeniously reapportioned the delegate representation in a way that completely broke Boen's Norwegian-American political power at the county convention. Elmer Adams of the Journal explained how it promised to effectively "give Boen a very black eye."

The ex-congressman is the strongest in the heavy Populist towns[hips] namely, such towns as Norwegian Grove, Trondhjem, Aastad, Sverdrup, Tordenskjold, Nidaros, Folden and a few others. In fact the Populist vote is almost entirely cast in about twenty [strongly Norwegian] towns[hips], these twenty giving twice as many votes as the remaining forty-five precincts. Boen is strong in these towns[hips]. In order to weaken his influence in the convention the apportionment was juggled so that these big towns[hips] lose their influence. This was done by giving each town[ship] one delegate at large.¹⁵²

This bold stroke would insure Hanson's renomination to the clerk of court position and severely undermine Boen's control over the convention's proceedings.

Despite this setback, the ex-congressman continued to fight Hanson and his group all the way into the convention. The argument he employed charged that Charles Hanson was no longer a true Populist. Hanson, Boen charged, had willingly placed some non-Populists on the ticket to broaden support and had filled subordinate positions in his clerk of court office with non-Populists. Although in 1890 and 1892 Boen had himself broadened support by coalescing with other political parties against the Republicans, this year the Boen forces staunchly opposed fusion. Only middle-of-the-road Populists should be nominated, the Boen faction demanded: "nominate only Populists! Fusion ends in confusion."¹⁵³

Perhaps due to the additional at-large delegates from ordinarily non-Populist townships, the People's Party county convention proved large, with over two hundred delegates present. After working out compromise language on the liquor question between wets and drys, nominations began. All went harmoniously until the time came to consider Hanson for the clerk of court post. After one speech recommended Hanson's nomination, Haldor Boen walked to the platform and, appearing entirely at ease, declared:

I have worked to have harmony in selecting our legislative ticket, but we have now come to a parting of the ways. Mr. Vigen has said that Hanson is a Populist. I say he is not a Populist and that is the reason I am opposed to his election. I know of no better test of a man's beliefs than his acts. He has

been willing to place men not Populists upon our ticket. He has given the position of deputy in his office to a rabid Republican, one of the wealthiest in the county, when many deserving and competent Populists would have . . . filled the position. Otto Nilsby, whom I desire to have placed in nomination is a Populist--is competent and will stand by the Populist party.¹⁵⁴

Hanson's co-worker, Charlie Smith, then stood on his chair and shouted that when Boen had been register of deeds, he too had given a Republican a job. Stepping back to the podium, Boen replied that he appointed the Republican before 1890, when he himself had been a Republican. As soon as he became a Populist officeholder, Boen said, he notified the Republican that he would have to go and a Populist took his place. Although Boen's rebuttal scored points, Hanson easily achieved nomination by a vote of 141 to 59. On this crucial matter Boen had been soundly beaten.¹⁵⁵

The last order of business entailed appointing a delegation to the Seventh District congressional convention. The dispirited Boen made little effort to control the matter and so received a delegation only loosely and generally pledged to himself. At the Seventh District convention, Boen's competitor for the position, Edwin E. Lommen, won nomination over Boen. Lommen, who had lost to Boen in 1892, now led from the start and steadily gained votes from Boen's own delegation and others until on the eighth ballot he emerged as victor. Boen had

allowed his name to go before the convention to prove that, despite rumors by Hanson's faction that Boen had lost his following, he still had considerable strength in the county. With mingled bitterness and pride, Boen wrote after the convention:

When the delegation was made up I paid very little attention to its personnel and wrote down any name suggested whether I knew him to be friend or foe, even insisting that my bitterest political opponent C. Smith [Hanson's protégé] should remain on the delegation. . . .

I am conceited enough to think that had I asked the county district convention for it, I would have been permitted to select the delegates to the district convention with myself at the head of the list as was done in 1892, and that in the face of the two scamps who, during the last few months have been maligning me.¹⁵⁶

Thereafter, Boen traveled to both the state convention and the national meeting at St. Louis, steadfastly opposing the tide of fusion sentiment that swept over the Populist and Democratic parties. At the state convention, Boen stood "on the outside of the breastworks," refusing "to meet with the Otter Tail delegation when it caucussed" and staying "'middle-of-the-road' to the last."¹⁵⁷ At the national convention, he fought against total fusion by advocating the Bryan and Watson combination ticket ultimately nominated.¹⁵⁸

Gradually, however, Boen resigned himself to statewide fusion, and urged "every citizen who favors a cleaning out of the state stable, otherwise known as the State

Capitol, to . . . work for the election of [Democrat/Populist] John Lind until the polls close."¹⁵⁹ But in Otter Tail County the struggles between Boen's strictly Populist and Hanson's fusionist forces continued unabated. When Boen's county campaign committee encouraged activities emphasizing separate People's party status, Hanson's wing countered by deferring to their Democratic candidates and for forming a new campaign committee in place of Boen's organization.¹⁶⁰

As elsewhere through the Prairie and Plains region, Free Silver became the main issue in the campaign.¹⁶¹ Otter Tail's Republicans predicted that many Norwegian Populists would desert the fusion party, as would the German Democrats around Perham who held decided "sound money" views. But voting returns directly contradicted this forecast. The eight most predominantly German settlements increased their Democratic vote by 20 percentage points over their average gubernatorial vote in 1894.¹⁶² Moreover, Norwegian-American precincts increased their vote for the fusion candidate by 5 percentage points over their Populist vote of two years before. Although once again a Republican captured the congressional seat, in Otter Tail races, fusionists gained back--albeit with slight pluralities--several county offices lost in 1894 and all of the state representative seats.¹⁶³ Dissatisfied,

editor Elmer Adams grumbled that the Populist victories were "due to the fact that ten or twelve heavy Norwegian towns[hips] in which English papers are not taken, voted solidly for every man on their ticket, regardless of qualifications or record."¹⁶⁴ To which Boen heatedly replied that "the world knows that you slander them." Norwegian-Americans, he said, "have been the surest pay and the closest readers of the Journal in this county" and "every Norwegian here ought to resent that and all the other insults of the Journal" by abandoning it.¹⁶⁵

From 1896 onward the People's party steadily declined in Otter Tail County as it further traded with other parties and as the state and national party faded away. The Hanson-Boen feud continued on past 1898 when the party proved incapable of electing but half of their legislative ticket and only a portion of their county slate.¹⁶⁶ Still Charles Hanson's Fergus Falls and Perham Populists remained in control of the party machinery until after 1902, when the People's party lost its identity entirely through amalgamation with the Democratic party. As for Boen, he never again attended a county Populist convention after 1896, but his radicalism increased with time, moving him into socialism and impelling him to publish his sharp outspoken views until his death in 1912.¹⁶⁷

VIII

Otter Tail Populism may have lost its identity, but Norwegian settlements carried the imprint of their political legacy. Republicanism had little appeal for them for the next two decades after the election of 1896. Gradually Ole Sageng, a young rural politician who had joined the Populist organization in its dying years, eased Norwegian voters into independent progressive Republicanism. But such ties remained fragile at best. With the onset of the Nonpartisan League during World War I and the ensuing Farmer-Labor movement, the latent populism of the settlements burst forth again. Norwegian precincts where Populism had most thrived became the stronger adherents of the new agrarian movement while the weaker Populist precincts continued to find Ole Sageng's progressive Republicanism most attractive.

NOTES

¹Fergus Falls (Minn.) Globe, Apr. 25, 1896.

²For discussions of regional agricultural patterns, see: Oliver E. Baker, "Agricultural Regions of North America," Economic Geography, III (1927), 447-465; IV (1928), 44-73, 399-433; John Fraser Hart, The Look of the Land (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1975), chap. ix; Edward Van Dyke Robinson, Early Economic Conditions and the Development of Agriculture in Minnesota (Minneapolis, 1915); John C. Weaver, "Changing Patterns of Cropland Use in the Middle West," Economic Geography, XXX (1954), 1-18; Ladd Haystead and Gilbert C. Fite, The Agricultural Regions of the United States (Norman, Okla., 1955).

³Baker, "Agricultural Regions," IV, 426.

⁴Theodore Saloutos, "The Agricultural Problem and Nineteenth-Century Industrialism," Agricultural History, XXIII (1948), 156, 160-165. Useful on problems of agricultural expansion during this era are: W. A. Coutts, "Agricultural Depression in the United States," Publications of the Michigan Political Science Association, II (1896-1897), 1-65; C. F. Emerick, "An Analysis of Agricultural Discontent in the United States," Political Science Quarterly, (1896); Fred A. Shannon, The Farmer's Last Frontier: Agriculture, 1860-1879 (New York, 1945, chaps. viii, xiii).

⁵Herman C. Nixon, "The Populist Movement in Iowa," Iowa Journal of History and Politics, XXIV (1926), 3; Leland L. Sage, A History of Iowa (Ames, 1974), pp. 188-192.

⁶Sage, History of Iowa, pp. 204-209, 211-213; Herman C. Nixon, "Economic Basis of the Populist Movement in Iowa," Iowa Journal of History and Politics, XXI (1923), 391.

⁷From 1891 through 1895, Logan Township gave nearly one-half of her vote to third parties and Eden followed

with from 28 to 42 percent of her votes. Mount Valley and Linden townships provided lesser but significant portions.

⁸An examination of the 1891 Union labor vote and the People's party vote of 1893 and 1895 showed that they correlated most strongly with percent of crop acreage planted in wheat (i.e., 1891 = .43; 1893 = .38; 1895 = .53) and also with estimated time of principal settlement (1891 = -.47; 1893 = .44; 1895 = .46). The Pearson Product Moment Correlation between the two independent variables was .43.

⁹The 1892 townships included Jefferson + Springville Village (Vernon County), 22.3%; Navarino (Shawano County), 37.8%; Sand Creek (Dunn County), 48.5%; Grant (Dunn County), 62.0%; Colfax Township and Village (Dunn County), 27.8%. The Populist leaning settlements in 1894 were reduced to Navarino (Shawano County), 24.4%; Sand Creek (Dunn County), 25.0%; and Grant (Dunn County), 34.4%.

¹⁰Estimated time of major settlement correlated strongly with percentage vote for Populist gubernatorial candidates, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation being .52 in 1892 and .50 in 1894. An excellent summary of the electoral sources of Wisconsin Populism is Roger E. Wyman, "Agrarian Working Class Radicalism? The Electoral Basis of Populism in Wisconsin," Political Science Quarterly, LXXXIX (1975), 825-847.

¹¹Greater average values per acre were negatively related to the percent vote for Populist gubernatorial candidates, Pearson Product Moment Correlations being -.22 in 1892 and -.23 in 1894. Of the 48 Norwegian townships examined, four of the five Populist inclined settlements numbered among the ten settlements with the lowest average value per acre and the greatest degree of potato cash crop farming--this according to the 1905 Wisconsin State Census.

¹²This departs considerably from the analysis of Paul Kleppner in his Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics, 1850-1900 (New York, 1970), p. 140. The Populist Party in Wisconsin, he suggests, comprised "essentially a coalition of Swedish, Norwegian, and native pietists." Surely this did not apply to Norwegian areas, for the liturgical or less evangelical oriented Norwegian Synod congregations made up a large portion of the townships that leaned toward Populism. Three of the five most Populist of the Norwegian settlements in 1892 lay in Dunn County. Grant Township, the

most Populist of the three, was a Norwegian Synod community and in the other two townships an estimated one-half or more of the Norwegians who belonged to Lutheran churches held membership in Norwegian Synod congregations. Estimates based on O. M. Norlie, Norsk Lutherske Menigheter i America, 1843-1916 (Minneapolis, 1918), I, 123-275; II, 496-520.

¹³Richard J. Jensen, The Winning of the Midwest, 1888-1896 (Chicago, 1971), pp. 135-137; Roger E. Wyman, "Wisconsin Ethnic Groups and the Election of 1890," Wisconsin Magazine of History, LI (1968).

¹⁴Compared to the vote for the Republican candidate in 1888, the 1890 vote for the Republican incumbent fell in Norwegian settlements by percentages that corresponded to their predominant Lutheran church orientation as follows: Hauges Synod (pietist) = 6.5%; United Church and Lutheran Free Church (moderately pietist) = 8.6%; Mixed pietist and Norwegian Synod congregations = 8.3%; Norwegian Synod (liturgical) = 13.9%.

¹⁵This reasoning about the relation of agrarian radicalism to different farming systems conforms to that first enunciated by Benton H. Wilcox, "An Historical Definition of Northwestern Radicalism," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXVI (1929), 382-394. Most subsequent studies have reached similar conclusions. See, for example, Theodore Saloutos and John D. Hicks, Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West, 1900-1939 (Madison, 1951), chaps. i, ii, vii.

¹⁶Henrietta M. Larson, The Wheat Market and the Farmer in Minnesota, 1858-1900 (New York, 1926), pp. 118-119, 126, 142, 149, 255. The east-west railroad lines not touching Minneapolis included the Southern Minnesota, the Winona and St. Peter and the Northern Pacific.

¹⁷Samuel P. Hays, "Political Parties and the Community-Society Continuum," The American Party Systems: Stages of Development, ed. William Nisbet Chambers and Walter Dean Burnham (New York, 1967), p. 158.

¹⁸For analysis of conditions in the northwestern part of the state, see Larson, Wheat Market in Minnesota, chaps. v-vii.

¹⁹Ada (Minn.) Puhler's Red River Valley Journal, Oct. 2, 1885.

²⁰Ibid., Oct. 9, 1885.

²¹Ibid., reprint of story from Minneapolis Tribune.

²²Ibid. The editor charged that the millers have "monopolized and pooled the farmers of the Red River Valley out of thousands of dollars." Another editor concluded that "the miller ring is in company with the railroad ring," adding that now "the settlers in the Red River Valley are as helpless and servile as were the Negro race in the sunny South thirty years ago." Ada (Minn.) Norman County Herald, May 5, 1888.

²³The impact of the McKinley Tariff is discussed in Minneapolis (Minn.) Folkebladet quoted in The North, Nov. 12, 1890; Minneapolis (Minn.) Normanna quoted in The North, Nov. 19, 1890; Crookston (Minn.) Red River Dalen quoted in The North, Dec. 10, 1890; Ada Norman County Herald, Oct. 31, 1890; Battle Lake (Minn.) Review, Nov. 20, 1890; Chicago Inter-Ocean quoted in Rushford (Minn.) Star, Nov. 20, 1890; Ada Norman County Index quoted in Ada Norman County Herald, Nov. 21, 1890.

²⁴Localities with lower-average land values yielded lower Republican percentages and, unlike corn raising areas, those wheat assumed importance demonstrated weaker Republican allegiance. Lower Republican votes also came from two other sectors: recently established Norwegian settlements and rural townships situated farther from the county seat. Collectively these indicators accounted for one-half or more of the total voting differences shown by Minnesota's Norwegian settlements during the 1890's, although the individual contributions of each varied somewhat during particular years. See Table 13, Appendix C. The most influential variables were selected from a larger array of individual correlations computed between the Republican gubernatorial vote and measures of cultural and economic conditions. I then tested relationships and relative strengths of the most influential variables by means of partial and multiple correlation.

²⁵This absence of association held regardless of whether the votes for governor from predominantly pietist (Haugean, United Lutheran, Lutheran Free Church) or liturgical (Norwegian Synod plus townships where neither liturgical or pietist congregations predominated) settlements were aggregated by Minnesota as a whole or by region within the state. Furthermore, individual Pearson Product Moment Correlations of the agrarian candidate vote (1890-1896) with estimated percent Norwegian Synod affiliation

failed to produce a linear relationship stronger than $-.07$. This also held for presidential elections, as Table 10, Appendix C reveals.

²⁶An index of regional peripherality drew my attention after noting the importance of this relationship in Norway described by Stein Rokkan and Henry Valen, "The Mobilization of the Periphery: Data on Turnout, Party Membership and Candidate Recruitment in Norway," Acta Sociologica, VI (1962), 111-1158. Norwegian-American settlement classifications were assigned according to their central or peripheral location in Minnesota. Centrally situated rural settlements possessed greater advantages of communication, wealth and services (i.e., relatively close to the county seat, higher land values, and contained an incorporated town or village) while peripheral townships lacked these attributes. I classified as "extremely peripheral" settlements where the center of the township is located 12.9 miles or more from the county seat and which contained 10.5 percent or less small town/village population (1910) and where the land values were two dollars per acre or more below the mean value of such values in the state (1905). Settlements with two of the three attributes became "moderately peripheral" while those with "low peripherality" met only one of the criteria.

²⁷When I classified Norwegian precincts in the northwestern counties according to whether they contained incorporated small town/village populations in low (0-16%), moderate (16.8%-34.9%), or high (35% or more) proportions, the votes for agrarian gubernatorial candidates between 1890 and 1896 averaged as follows: Low = 70.1%; Moderate = 65.2%; High = 57.8%. Conversely, precincts with larger small town/village populations voted more strongly Republican: Low = 24.5%; Moderate = 24.3%; High = 34.4%.

²⁸Before 1890 Norwegian settlements voted more as a bloc for the Republican party candidates even though the linear correlation remained low between percent of voting age Norwegian males and Republican votes for governor. But despite the reasons behind Norwegian bloc voting for Republicans, the Democratic party was unable to use "nationality" to breach this attachment. Back in 1883 the Democrats sought to overcome its crippled minority status by placing Norwegian-born Adolph Bierman at the head of their state ticket--the first Norwegian to run for governor. Frantically, the Republican press struggled to

hold the Norwegian vote in line and met with general success. Only seventeen out of seventy-five Norwegian settlements I examined cast majorities for Bierman and the geographical distribution of Bierman's pluralities was scattered. For press opinion, see Minneapolis Tribune, quoted in Rushford Star, Oct. 18, 1883; "The Scandinavians in the Late American Elections," Scandinavia, I (1883), 25-26; Rushford Star, Sept. 27, Oct. 11, 25, Nov. 1, 1883.

²⁹He voted for the Morrison Bill in 1884 and for the Mills Bill in 1888. According to the Benson (Minn.) Swift County Monitor, Aug. 24, 1888, after he voted for the Mill's Bill, the Republican papers "changed their opinion of Knute Nelson," saying that "he is over rated in ability, dishonest to his party, and has held office long enough under false pretenses. . . ."

³⁰Benson Swift County Monitor, Nov. 28, 1890; The North, Nov. 12, 1890; Chicago (Ill.) Skandinaven quoted in The North, Nov. 19, 1890; Chicago (Ill.) Amerika quoted in The North, Nov. 19, 1890.

³¹From excerpts of a letter dated Jan. 1, 1915 sent to an old family friend in Norway and reprinted as "The Unelected President," The Norseman (1971), 15.

³²Many denounced the move as a blatant appeal to nationality prejudice. For press opinion, see St. Peter Herald, quoted in Benson Swift County Monitor, Nov. 4, 1892, and Wabash Democrat quoted in Benson Swift County Monitor, Aug. 26, 1892; St. Paul (Minn.) Great West, May 6, 27, 189. Also see Carl H. Chrislock, "The Politics of Protest in Minnesota, 1890-1901" (doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1954), pp. 184-186.

³³St. Paul Globe quoted in the Benson Swift County Monitor, Aug. 5, 1892.

³⁴The four townships included Norwegian Grove, Sverdrup, Tordenskjold and Folden.

³⁵"The Unelected President," p. 16. Concerning his larger plurality of 60,000 in 1894, Nelson said "I lost a great many Norwegian votes, but the Swedes stood firm; the Americans were more enthusiastic for me than they had been before."

³⁶Nicolas Grevstad to Knute Nelson, July 18, 1892, Knute Nelson Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

³⁷Minneapolis (Minn.) Irish Standard, Dec. 3, 1892. See also its issues at Nov. 26 and Dec. 10, 1892.

³⁸Fergus Falls (Minn.) Weekly Journal, Nov. 21, 1895; John W. Mason, ed., History of Otter Tail County Minnesota (Indianapolis, 1916), I, 57-58.

³⁹Refer Mason, History of Otter Tail County, I, 297; Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Nov. 21, 1895; Robinson, Early Economic Conditions and Agriculture in Minnesota, pp. 57ff.

⁴⁰The published summary of the 1905 Minnesota census identified where fathers of persons enumerated were born. Data for Otter Tail County revealed the most frequently noted birthplaces to be as follows: Norway, 29%; United States, 26%; Germany, 18%; Sweden, 13%; Finland, 6%; Denmark, 2%; with the remaining 6% divided among twelve countries. Refer, Secretary of State, Fifth Decennial Census of the State of Minnesota (St. Paul, 1905), p. 197.

⁴¹The thirteen Norwegian townships included: Oscar, Trondhjem, Norwegian Grove, Aastad, Aurdal, Dane Prairie, Tumuli, Sverdrup, Tordenskjold, St. Olaf, Everts, Nidaros, and Folden.

⁴²Mason, History of Otter Tail County, I, 297-298.

⁴³William Watts Folwell, A History of Minnesota (St. Paul, 1926), III, 168-169; John D. Hicks, "The Origin and Early History of the Farmers' Alliance in Minnesota," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, IX (1922), 204-205.

⁴⁴Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Apr. 10, May 15, 22 Jun. 5, 1884. For biographical information on Hompe, see Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Oct. 30, 1890; Mason, History of Otter Tail County, II, 646-647.

⁴⁵Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Jun. 23, 1892; Mason, History of Otter Tail County, II, 34-35.

⁴⁶Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Sept. 18, 1884, Oct. 30, 1890.

⁴⁷Ibid., Sept. 18, 1884. Republican townsmen were none too happy about the Alliance demands and heightened Main Street and countryside antagonisms distinguished the ensuing campaign. "Take my warning," an alarmed Republican editor finally told his Fergus Falls townsmen, "be a hog and take the consequences" if they antagonize farmers by

cutting their candidates. See an open letter by John Hompe to the Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Oct. 30, 1884 and editorial in Battle Lake Review reprinted in the Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Nov. 6, 1884. On small town versus countryside conflicts as a widespread phenomenon during this era, refer Robert R. Dykstra, "Town-Country Conflict: A Hidden Dimension in American Social History," Agricultural History, XXXVIII (1964), 195-204; Frederick C. Luebke, "Main Street and the Countryside: Patterns of Voting in Nebraska During the Populist Era," Nebraska History, L (1969), 257-275.

⁴⁸Boen's decision not to run was despite indications he might poll more votes than Bjorge in Norwegian areas. Underwood's postmaster informed the Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Oct. 30, 1884 that ". . . if the election district was limited to the three [largely Norwegian] towns[hips], Aurdal, Sverdrup, and Tordenskjold, where they are both equally known, it is safe to say that Mr. Bjorge would be badly beaten; and why? Because Boen has a far better education, much more grit, and a much larger store of experience."

⁴⁹Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Jun. 10, 1886.

⁵⁰Ibid. Anfin Solem edited the Fergus Falls (Minn.) Ugeblad. Born of farm parents near Trondhjem, Norway in 1850, he graduated from a seminary near his home town and taught school. Coming to Otter Tail County in 1879, he worked at several odd jobs until 1884 when he purchased a poorly performing Norwegian language newspaper and became its editor. By 1890 the circulation had grown to 1,500 weekly. See Album of Biography: of the Famous Valley of the Red River of the North and the Park Regions (Chicago, 1889), pp. 429-430.

⁵¹Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Jun. 10, 24, Jul. 1, Oct. 7, 1886. Editor Elmer E. Adams emerged as one of the most powerful Republican leaders during this period under study. Born in 1861 of native Vermont parents, the family moved to Minneapolis in 1879 and he finished his education at the Minnesota State University in 1884. This same year he became editor of the Fergus Falls Daily Telegram and, within a year, had consolidated it with the Fergus Falls Weekly Journal under his editorship. Republican in politics, the Journal boasted a weekly circulation of 2,300 in 1889. Added biographical information is found in Album of Biography, pp. 440-441, and the Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Nov. 21, 1895.

⁵²Many Alliancemen remained angry after the convention. The Fergus Falls Ugeblad continued listing the Alliance endorsed ticket instead of changing to the new Republican lineup. Republicans expressed concern that the Alliance might field its own endorsements, but nothing came of it. Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Jul. 1, 1886.

⁵³Ibid., Oct. 7, 1884. Voting results for this and other local elections in the county were secured from post-election issues of the Weekly Journal.

⁵⁴Other reasons for the decline within the state at large are cited in Donald F. Warner, "Prelude to Populism," Minnesota History, XXXII (1951), 131-133.

⁵⁵Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Apr. 5, 19, 1888.

⁵⁶Ibid., Apr. 19, 1888.

⁵⁷Ibid., Jun. 7, 1888. Boen claimed the fight was a personal one against himself.

⁵⁸The description of Haldor Boen's personal qualities is based on several sources, the most important of which include: Biographical sketch (author unknown) contained in the township history files prepared by the W.P.A. Historical Project for the Otter Tail County Historical Society, Fergus Falls; Harold E. Boen, "Side Lights on the Life of Haldor E. Boen," Fergus Falls Journal, Jan. 5, 1940; Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Jun. 23, 1892, Feb. 15, 1894.

⁵⁹Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Jun. 23, 1892.

⁶⁰Ibid., Jun. 7, 1888.

⁶¹Ibid., Jun. 14, 1888.

⁶²Warner, "Prelude to Populism," 136-137; John D. Hicks, "The Peoples Party in Minnesota," Minnesota History Bulletin, V (1924), 536-538.

⁶³See Battle Lake Review, Jun. 19, 1890 and its editorial reprinted in Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, May 29, 1890, as well as all May and June issues of the Fergus Falls Weekly Journal.

⁶⁴Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, May 8, 1890.

⁶⁵The Journal's account of the Ugeblad's views and reaction to them are contained in the Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, May 29, Jun. 5, 1890.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid., Jun. 5, 1890.

⁶⁸Charles W. Brandborg was a prominent Allianceman who worked closely with John Hompe. Born in 1847 in Halland, Sweden, he learned the stone mason's trade as a youth before immigrating to Wisconsin in 1873. About 1881 he homesteaded near Henning in Otter Tail County. He joined the Farmers' Alliance in 1884 and became affiliated with the Knights of Labor three years later. A man of strong Alliance views and deep Prohibition convictions, Brandborg presided as chairman of the Republican county executive committee in 1888 and, as of 1890, he was both president of the County Alliance and a member of the Alliance campaign committee. Brandborg was offered but declined the nomination for Congress in 1890. For added biographical information, see Charles W. Brandborg and Family Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul; and Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Jul. 9, 1891.

⁶⁹Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Jun. 19, 1890. Internal friction briefly threatened to explode the harmonious proceedings when someone proposed to empower the executive committee to remove from the ticket any nominee who accepted nomination or endorsement from another political party. A bitter flareup ensued between Boen and Plowman over the 1886 election, when the Republicans nominated Plowman and other Alliance-endorsed candidates but left Boen and Hompe out in the cold. Boen alleged that when he and Hompe mounted independent candidacies, the Republican nominees had "knifed them at every opportunity" which prompted Plowman to shake his fist toward Boen, denying Boen's allegations and the "malicious . . . dirty spirit" in which they had been made.

⁷⁰Ibid. There is some confusion on this. In its issue of May 26, 1892, the Journal's editor said "it was Mr. Boen who smoked out the Republican nominees in 1890 and forced them to declare either for or against the Alliance."

⁷¹Ibid., June 26, 1890. The Journal recommended the four men be guaranteed a Republican nomination while the

Ugeblad saw the refusal of nominations as a snub to the working man.

⁷²Fergus Falls Daily Journal, Jul. 2, 1890; A. C. Richardson to Charles Brandborg, Aug. 11, 1890, Brandborg Papers.

⁷³Fergus Falls (Minn.) Globe, Jun. 13, 1896, Mar. 5, Nov. 26, 1898.

⁷⁴Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Aug. 21, 1890.

⁷⁵Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Aug. 21, Oct. 9, 20, 1890; Hans Nelson to Charles Brandborg, Aug. 22, 1890, Brandborg Papers.

⁷⁶Battle Lake Review, Nov. 20, 1890.

⁷⁷Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Oct. 30, 1890.

⁷⁸A. O. Richardson to C. W. Brandborg, Oct. 30, 1890, Brandborg Papers.

⁷⁹Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Nov. 6, 1890.

⁸⁰Ethnic concentrations derived from the 1895 Minnesota state census schedules at the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul. The Legislative Manual of the State of Minnesota provided necessary election data.

⁸¹For the entire city, the Alliance/Populist vote for governor averaged 36.7 percent from 1890 through 1896. The average share from each ward was as follows: First ward, 44.9%; Second ward, 29.8%; Third ward, 33.9%; Fourth ward, 42.5%.

⁸²Chrislock, "Politics of Protest in Minnesota," pp. 142-143; John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt, (Lincoln, 1961), pp. 96-127, 205-237; Hicks, "People's Party in Minnesota," 541-542; Warner, "Prelude to Populism," 138-145.

⁸³Chrislock, "Politics of Protest in Minnesota," p. 145.

⁸⁴Warner, "Prelude to Populism," 145.

⁸⁵As reported in the Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Jun. 18, 1891.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid., Jul. 9, 1891.

⁹⁰Ibid., Jul. 9, 16, 1891.

⁹¹Ibid., Jul. 16, 1891.

⁹²Ibid., Jul. 9, 16, 1891.

⁹³Ibid., Aug. 13, 1891.

⁹⁴Ibid., Jul. 30, Aug. 13, 1891; Battle Lake Review, Jul. 30, 1891.

⁹⁵Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Dec. 17, 1891, June 18, 1892.

⁹⁶See the February and March issues of the Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, 1892.

⁹⁷Actions of the Otter Tail Alliance at the annual state meeting of the Alliance offer an example of the local attempt to stir up such a revolt. Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Dec. 24, 1891 and Jan. 14, 1892.

⁹⁸Ibid., Mar. 10, 1892. See also the issue of March 3.

⁹⁹Ibid., Mar. 3, 1892. Evidently, some Donnelly men who distrusted Boen saw Boen's attempt to placate rather than eradicate as an act of betrayal. H. L. Burgess to Dr. E. W. Fish, Apr. 8, 1892, Ignatius Donnelly Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., Mar. 17, 1892. The Journal reported that editor Solem of the Ugeblad concluded the People's party had no right to enter the county and interfere, for it would only injure the farmers' movement here. Most attending the County Alliance executive committee meeting still held that the Alliance party ought to exist separate from the People's party, but, instead of making a final decision, they called a convention of the entire County Alliance on May 19 to decide the matter. Perhaps this was because four of its members had been named by Boen to be on the People's party central committee.

¹⁰¹Ibid., Mar. 24, 1892.

¹⁰²Ibid., May 26, 1892.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid., June 23, 1892. As in past Alliance conventions, twenty-five of the sixty-six townships did not send representatives and the Fergus Falls city wards sent a total of eight delegates. None came from Hompe's home township of Deer Creek or from Brandborg's town of Henning. An attempt to bring the Ugeblad's editor into the People's party by sending him as a delegate to the state convention met with failure. He coldly declined, declaring he was out of politics.

¹⁰⁶Further Alliance resistance in the state nearly collapsed after the Otter Tail and Seventh District party organizations merged into the People's party. Capturing this stronghold of farmer discontent so undermined the bargaining power of the state Farmers' Alliance party that only one-fourth of the eligible delegates attended the state convention in July. Warner, "Prelude to Populism," 144-145.

¹⁰⁷Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Jun. 30, 1892.

¹⁰⁸Battle Lake Review, Jul. 17, 1890; Fergus Falls Globe, Jul. 17, 1890; Fergus Falls Journal, Jan. 5, 1940.

¹⁰⁹Fergus Falls Globe, Mar. 21, 1896.

¹¹⁰Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Feb. 15, 1894 quoting comments by Congressman A. J. Cummings in the New York Sun.

¹¹¹Ibid., Sept. 8, 1892; Fergus Falls Globe, Sept. 3, 1892.

¹¹²Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Oct. 30, 1890.

¹¹³Reprinted in the Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Jul. 7, 1892. Boen's enemies had long tagged him as "a political trader" interested more in office than principles. See, for example, Battle Lake Review, Oct. 6, 13, 1892.

114 Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Oct. 20, 1892. Also see its issue of Oct. 30, 1890 and the Fergus Falls Globe, Oct. 31, 1896.

115 Examples of Ugeblad editorial opinion are described in the following issues of the Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, May 12, 19, 26, Jun. 2, Jul. 2, Aug. 18, 1892.

116 That the Ugeblad's resistance to the new People's party also proved costly to itself is apparent in a letter from a Scandinavian farmer to Donnelly. "Last Saturday I attended a People's party caucus of what I call 'my own alliance-336 Leaf Lake', entitled to four delegates to the county convention, and I tell you, the wind that was blowing then out there boded no good for . . . [the Hompe, Brandborg forces]--even "Ugebladet," . . . had lost its influence. I attended the county convention at Fergus Falls last Thursday: the same wind was blowing there." A. P. Onsdorff to Ignatius Donnelly, Jun. 18, 1892, Donnelly Papers.

117 Haldor E. Boen to Ignatius Donnelly, Jul. 26, 1892, Donnelly Papers.

118 Fergus Falls Globe, Aug. 6, 1892. People's party men lamely countered that the Ugeblad's editor must be in the pay of the Republicans, since he had failed to support candidates of the People's party whose principles he espoused. But later in the campaign the argument gained a little credence when one of Solem's anti-Boen editorials appeared as a Republican circular printed on Ugeblad type. Fergus Falls Globe, Oct. 15, 23, 1892; Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Oct. 20, 1892.

119 Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Oct. 6, 1892. At this time the Populist's only support came from the Fergus Falls Globe, an English language paper of small circulation whose editor strongly espoused prohibitionism and devoted only intermittent attention to People's party politics.

120 Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Sept. 29, 1892; Fergus Falls Globe, Oct. 1, 1892.

121 Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Oct. 20, 1892.

122 *Ibid.*, Nov. 24, 1892.

123 Haldor Boen to Ignatius Donnelly, Nov. 22, 1892, Donnelly Papers. In the legislative and county races, voters elected the entire People's party ticket, although with slimmer majorities than in 1890. Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Nov. 17, 1892.

124 Mason, History of Otter Tail County, I, 664-666; and all December issues of the Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, 1893.

125 Fergus Falls Globe, Mar. 31, Apr. 14, 1894.

126 Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Apr. 19, 1894.

127 Founded in 1893, the Fergus Falls Rodhuggeren quickly acquired the largest circulation in the county, with 4,500 issues weekly compared to the Ugeblad's 1,500. It became the most powerful paper politically among Norwegians. Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Jun. 12, 1890; Fergus Falls Globe, Mar. 7, 1896, Nov. 27, 1897.

128 Translation printed in Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Apr. 19, 1894.

129 On the Great Northern Railway strike, see Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Apr. 26, 1894. On the impact of radical rhetoric and events of 1894, see Chrislock, "Politics of Protest in Minnesota," pp. 229-240.

130 Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Apr. 19, Aug. 2, Oct. 4, 25, 1894.

131 Unidentified news clipping entitled "Boen Discontinues His Globe," 1912, contained in miscellaneous township information files of Otter Tail County Historical Society, Fergus Falls.

132 Boen later claimed the Republicans spent \$60,000 to defeat him. Undated news clipping entitled "Boen Abandons Paper," Minneapolis Journal, 1912, in miscellaneous township information files of the Otter Tail County Historical Society, Fergus Falls.

133 Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Jun. 7, Jul. 12, 1894.

134 Fergus Falls Globe, Jul. 28, 1894.

135 Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Oct. 11, 1894.

136 Ibid., Oct. 11, 1894.

137 Fergus Falls Globe, Oct. 20, 1894.

138 Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Oct. 25, 1894.

139 Ibid., Also see issues of Oct. 4, 11, 1894.

140 Ibid., Nov. 22, 1894.

141 Ibid., Nov. 29, 1894.

142 Ibid.

143 Interview with Harald Boen, Haldor's son, at his house in Wadena, Minnesota, Sept. 4, 1970. Haldor Boen, in 1892, had wanted to take his family to Washington, but his wife, an unassuming, quiet woman who desired a simple home life with her family, would not go. In a move he later regretted, Haldor instituted divorce proceedings and the court granted the decree shortly thereafter.

144 It is surprising that Boen could afford the price for the newspaper given that in April, 1894, he confided to Ignatius Donnelly that he was over six-thousand dollars in debt with his creditors demanding payment. Haldor Boen to Ignatius Donnelly, Apr. 5, 1894, Donnelly Papers.

145 Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Nov. 21, 1895.

146 Ibid., Feb. 13, 15, 1896.

147 Ibid., Mar. 26, 1896.

148 Fergus Falls (Minn.) Wheelock's Weekly, Oct. 15, 1895, Oct. 25, 1900; Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Apr. 11, 1907.

149 Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, May 21, 1896.

150 Fergus Falls Globe, May 9, 28, 1896; Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, May 14, Jun. 6, 1896. Two excellent accounts of the political situation are in the Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, May 14, Jun. 4, 1896.

151 Fergus Falls Globe, May 30, 1896.

152 Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Jun. 4, 1896. The effect of the new revised apportionment is seen by

considering the proportions of delegates from two towns. Boen's home town of Aurdal cast one hundred eleven Populist votes and got seven delegates which is only one delegate to sixteen voters whereas Star Lake cast only eleven Populist votes and received two delegates which was one delegate to five voters.

¹⁵³Fergus Falls Globe, Jun. 6, 1896.

¹⁵⁴Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Jun. 25, 1896.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., Fergus Falls Globe, June 27, 1896.

¹⁵⁶Fergus Falls Globe, Jul. 18, 1896. See also Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Jun. 25, Jul. 23, 1896.

¹⁵⁷St. Paul Dispatch, quoted in Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Sept. 24, 1896.

¹⁵⁸Fergus Falls Globe, Jul. 18, 1896.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., Oct. 10, 1896.

¹⁶⁰See, for example, incidents noted in the Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Sept. 3, 10, 17, 1896; Fergus Falls Globe, Sept. 5, 12, 1896.

¹⁶¹Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Sept. 24, Oct. 1, 22, 1896.

¹⁶²The German precincts included Effington, Edna, Corliss, Gorman, Dora, Pine Lake, Perham and Elisabeth.

¹⁶³Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Nov. 12, 1896.

¹⁶⁴Ibid. A similar comment about Populist success in Norwegian areas appeared in the next week's issue of Nov. 19.

¹⁶⁵Fergus Falls Globe, Nov. 14, 1896. See also, Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Oct. 22, 1896.

¹⁶⁶Fergus Falls Globe, Nov. 12, 1898. Some surmised that the falling off in the Populist vote owed itself to a change in the Minnesota constitution which disfranchised many immigrant voters. The Minnesota legislature of 1895 proposed to amend the elective franchise by disqualifying aliens from exercising the suffrage and voters approved it on November 3, 1896. Voters disfranchised by the

amendment were people of foreign birth who had declared their intention to become citizens but had not carried through to become full citizens.

¹⁶⁷Fergus Falls Globe, Nov. 10, 1900.

CHAPTER IV
NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN PROGRESSIVISM
AND THE LA FOLLETTE MOVEMENT
IN TREMPÉALEAU COUNTY

The farmers' Alliance and People's Party evaporated from the Upper Middle West, but the agricultural rhetoric of populist times lingered on, striking out at railroad abuses and invigorating the farmers' Equity movement that agitated for legislation favoring cooperative marketing and purchasing arrangements. Still, the umbrella of progressivism that emerged soon embraced far more. Strictly agrarian agitation lost its coherence and reform impulses broadened into "middle class" antimonopolism. Associated movements sprang up aimed against big business corruption and municipal graft, and a host of others worked out their visions for humanitarian relief and social uplift. Political reformers divided their energies between expanding popular control over politics by forcing through "direct primary" legislation, and instituting regulatory controls to reduce the undue influence of railroads, public utilities and other large interests.

I

The close of the nineteenth century found Republican organizations across the Upper Midwestern states becoming fragmented as these issues kindled bitter factionalism between conservative and progressive elements. The discord continued on until World War I. Although roughly similar, the many strains of progressivism worked themselves out in the distinctive context of indigenous politics in each state. Under Robert LaFollette, Wisconsin's progressives came to dominate the Republican party from 1900 until 1914. During the same period, Albert B. Cummins led active but less coherent progressive agitation in Iowa. In Minnesota, on the other hand, no single individual emerged to lead progressive forces within the Republican party, although the full complement of progressive issues weighted its politics.¹

The Norwegian vote reflected these differences in political leadership. The more single minded progressive causes in Wisconsin and Iowa, organized almost as one-man movements, increased Republican support among Norwegian-American settlements compared to their votes cast in the 1890's. The change proved less great in Iowa, than Wisconsin, however. Although the state's magnetic leader, Albert B. Cummins, three times led progressives to gubernatorial victory before senatorial honors sent him on

to Washington, progressive control over Iowa's Republican party only slightly increased the party's share of votes from either Norwegian settlements or the state at large. Cummins' statewide vote (1901-1906) improved by an average 4 percentage points over that of his Republican predecessors in the 1890's while it expanded 7 percentage points in Norwegian settlements. But it evidently mattered little whether the Republican candidate was "progressive" or "conservative," for votes from Iowa's Norwegian-American settlements only slightly declined when floundering progressive leadership permitted arch-standpat candidate Beryl F. Carroll to become governor in 1908 and 1910. Carroll's vote in these elections slipped an average 3 percentage points statewide from what Cummins had garnered and, similarly, it fell a mere 4 percentage points in Norwegian settlements. Meanwhile in Wisconsin, as we shall see, Republican votes from Norwegian settlements showed greater progressive loyalties. They ascended an average 10 percentage points for progressive candidates (1900-1912) and plummeted 25 percentage points in 1914 when stalwart candidate Emanuel Philipp successfully tapped the growing vein of conservative feeling running through the state.

Minnesota's Norwegian settlements responded differently, however, shifting back and forth between parties and candidates. There, progressive forces lacked leadership

of equal stature. Two governors held office during most of the progressive years (i.e., 1904-1914) and neither could be considered a progressive crusader. Of them, the popular John Johnson, a St. Paul editor, came closest to being a reform governor, but he was a Democrat. The son of Swedish immigrants, he won election in 1904 and was re-elected twice again before his death one year into his third term. Despite the Democratic label, Johnson's personal popularity attracted over 57 percent of the votes in Norwegian settlements in his first bid for re-election. But then in 1908, when the Republicans nominated "Jake" Jacobson, a reform minded Norwegian-American from western Minnesota, Johnson won only one-fourth of the votes cast by Norwegian settlements.²

With Johnson's death in office, Adolph O. Eberhart, the lieutenant governor, returned control over the governorship to the Republicans. But in his hands, progressive impulses went unnourished. Also of Swedish birth, Eberhart soon gravitated toward the party's conservative wing as he served two additional terms in office. He alienated Republican "drys" in 1910 when he refused to pledge for county option, he backed President Taft in 1912, and secured quick enactment of a state primary law in 1912 with the intention of splitting and overcoming his political opponents in his campaign for re-election. Clever and

affable, though heavily reliant on his political strategist E. E. "Big Ed" Smith, Eberhart's progressivism remained pallid, his commitment to reform seemingly more expedient than sincere. Still, Norwegian settlements cast most of their votes for him in 1910 although, two years later, many turned to the prohibition candidate in order to deny the governor their earlier majority support.³

II

During the Progressive Era expectant reformers looked to Wisconsin--the laboratory of political progressivism. And perhaps no one element did more to elect the strong willed man who made it so than did the state's Norwegian settlements. Robert M. LaFollette's infectious rhetoric captivated Norwegian audiences, and his energetic, daring politics and image as an implacable foe of the interests held their respect, even though his hasty judgment, and occasional self-righteous abrasiveness cost him friends along the way.

Steadily from the mid-nineties, Robert LaFollette put together an insurgent coalition that emerged to dominate Wisconsin politics during the first fourteen years of the new century. Particular help came from three sources: a discontented younger generation of lawyers within the Republican party who itched for office;

William D. Hoard, the former governor and influential dairy promoter; and, perhaps most important, votes of Norwegian settlements that expressed sensitivity to anti-monopolist and agrarian issues coupled with lingering feelings of party neglect in matters of political recognition.⁴ An historian of Robert M. LaFollette's rise to prominence sums up the Norwegians' integral importance to the progressive's success. "Despite defections," he notes, "the Norwegians delivered an almost solid bloc of votes for the progressives in each of their campaigns."⁵ Yet another powerful force--the Norwegian language newspapers--reinforced LaFollette's grip on the Norwegian vote. Especially helpful during his terms as governor was the powerful and widely circulated Chicago Skandinaven. Circulated to "well nigh every Norwegian home in Wisconsin," it found ready acceptance by many countrymen as gospel truth.⁶

Finding in LaFollette an able champion against public abuses, many Norwegians including several ambitious Norwegian-Americans (e.g., Congressman Nils Haugen, Andrew H. Dahl and Herman Ekern) campaigned mightily for "Fighting Bob" and other candidates promising effective reform. He had grown up in the predominantly Norwegian township of Primrose in Dane County and he sensed the political sentiments that moved Norwegian settlers.

Moreover his deft political sense and natural gregariousness were undoubtedly helped by his rough knowledge of Sogning, a west Norway dialect. Knowing the Norwegian's rustic sensitivity to hints of patronizing neglect and their agrarian suspicion of elites, LaFollette assiduously courted the Norwegian vote and entwined much of his hopes with theirs.⁷

Norwegian-Americans' reputation as the very bone and marrow of the party's progressive wing can easily be misinterpreted, however, as simply an attachment to the admired Robert LaFollette. Actually, the Norwegian commitment extended fully as much to LaFollette's cause and their own reach for political recognition as it did to LaFollette himself. Sometimes even LaFollette seemed to believe the inseparability of himself and the cause that he had so masterfully fused together in the public's thought. This made serious trouble for him when his own interests departed from those of his constituents. It happened most strikingly in 1906, when LaFollette's Norwegian born lieutenant governor sought the governorship after LaFollette became a United States Senator. The new Senator strenuously opposed Davidson's effort--desiring another man instead--but, nevertheless, Davidson handily beat LaFollette's choice in the primary to win by a larger margin of Norwegian votes than LaFollette ever garnered

himself during his years as governor. Even the Milwaukee progressive, Francis McGovern, won in 1910 by a plurality from Norwegian settlements that equaled any of LaFollette's past gubernatorial victories.

Nevertheless, although LaFollette's machine occasionally faltered, Wisconsin Norwegians' enthusiasm for progressive Republicans readily showed itself in percentages of their settlements' ballots cast in general elections for governor. Compared to the period 1880-1898, when a hefty 71 percent of the votes in Norwegian settlements went to Republicans, this further swelled by 10 percentage points during the period 1900 through 1912 when progressives controlled the party. Thereafter, from 1914 to 1924, the Norwegian Republican vote receded to an average of 74 percent. Meanwhile, the overall state vote hardly changed. Wisconsin's average vote of one period differed from that of the next by no more than 3 percentage points.⁸

But that is just the average, and it conceals variation. Norwegian settlements responded in different ways to the rise of LaFollette progressivism.⁹ It cannot be said, for example, that Norwegian settlements became equally enthusiastic for the progressives' cause. Compare, for example, the decade when progressives secured their greatest Norwegian vote (1900-1910) to the years

immediately before LaFollette's rise to the governorship (1892-1898). The shift in votes from one decade to the next--dramatically sharp in some townships and nearly indiscernible in others--ranged from -1.3 to 39.4 percentage points (see Table 6). The most extreme differences (that is, over 20 percent) came from settlements evidently disillusioned with Republicanism in the 1890's but fairly enthusiastic in their support for progressive gubernatorial candidates after LaFollette's emergence. The votes expressed no particular geographic distribution--Norwegian settlements that shifted strongly toward progressivism could be found near or adjacent to those, at the other extreme, showing little progressive enthusiasm.

But despite pronounced variations in the movement of Republican percentages returned from Wisconsin's Norwegian settlements, these percentages remained closely bunched. Only 20 percentage points or less ordinarily separated the most from the least Republican Norwegian townships. Yet, notwithstanding this political homogeneity, the sources of this modest spread in votes give added clues to what moved Norwegian settlements to vote as they did.¹⁰

Two stand out as consistent influences: the extent that farm renters operated holdings in each settlement, and the extent that potatoes made up an important part of the total value of harvested crops. Both can be taken as

Table 6

Extent that the Republican Share of Votes for
Governor Increased in Norwegian Settlements
from 1892-1898 to 1900-1910

Percent Increase	Number of Norwegian Settlements
4% or less	8
5-9%	11
10%-14%	12
15%-19%	8
20%-24%	6
25% or more	2

surrogate indicators of distinctions between wealthy and marginally prosperous settlements. In general, the more prosperous Norwegian townships proved to be the source of weakest Norwegian support for both LaFollette and other Republican candidates for governor (Figure 17).¹¹

Most of Norwegian-American farm renters lived in places such as Dane County where better agricultural lands could support on a single farmstead, both an owner and a tenant. Here, where sons and son-in-laws of farm owners usually became tenants or moved as renters onto the main holdings when the father retired to a town nearby, progressive Republicans attracted lower-than-average voter loyalty. Conversely, Norwegian settlements with greater potato production--the poorer sections of the state--provided greater-than-average Republican strength both during and before the rise of LaFollette's powerful organization. Why before? I am unable to say, but the fact suggests the limited applicability of a strictly economic interpretation, as it does a vigorous support for regular Republicanism regardless of who occupied the party's ticket.¹²

During the time of Fighting Bob's progressive assault against privilege, however, it would certainly be not unexpected to find poorer potato growing settlements favoring his cause. Agricultural lands in the southern

AVERAGE VALUE PER ACRE AND REPUBLICAN GUBERNATORIAL SUPPORT IN WISCONSIN

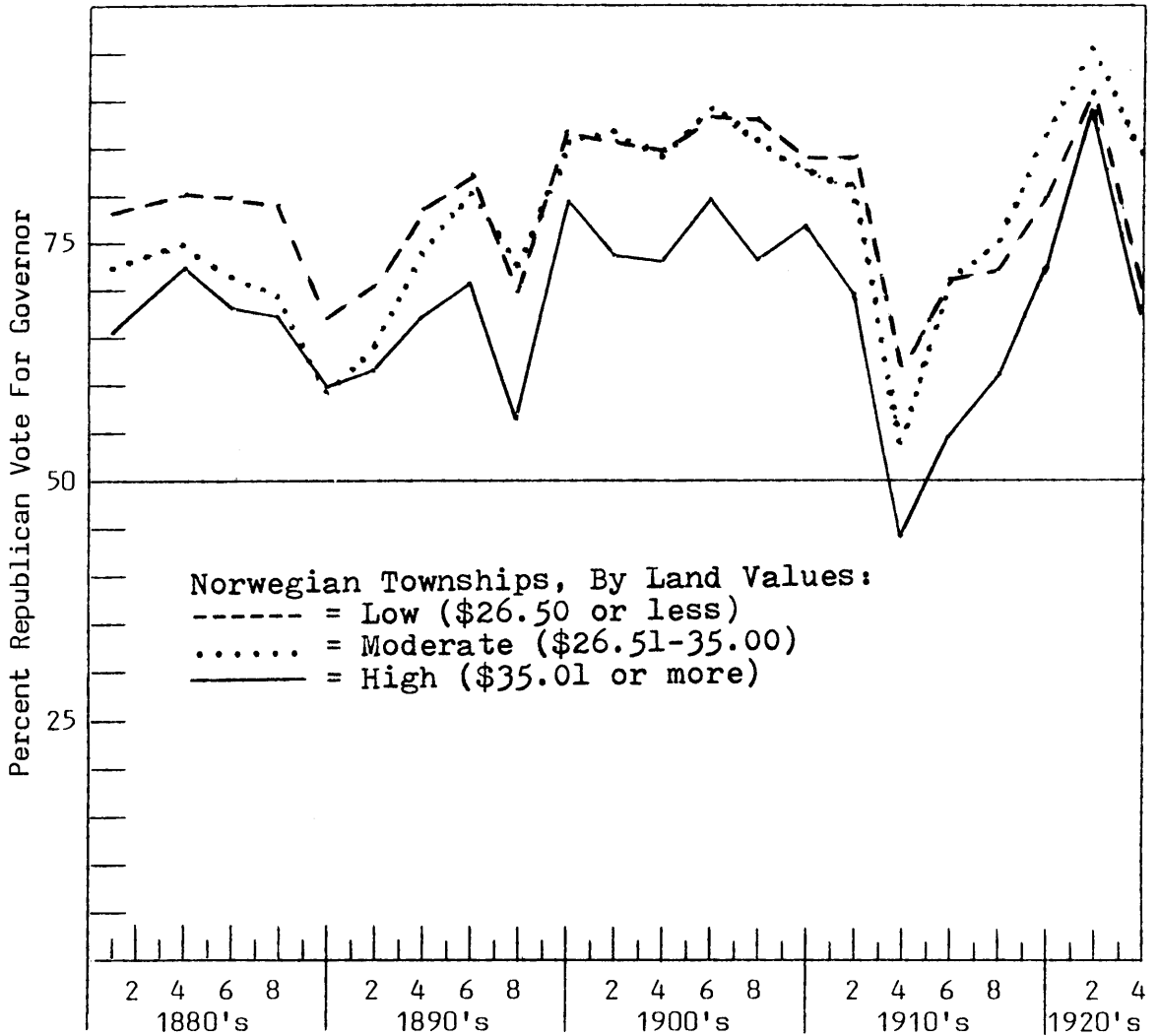


Figure 17. Republican share of vote for governor in Wisconsin's Norwegian settlements classified by average value per acre.

half of Wisconsin distinguished themselves from the "cutover" to the north, where lumbering dominated until the end of the nineteenth century.¹³ Good productivity generally characterized the southern portion, but farmers in the northern cutover needed to carve their holdings from vast stretches of pine, stump and brush cover, and stony, unfavorable soil. Unfortunately, all too often their efforts brought them little more than marginal farm prosperity. Many farmers here turned to potato cash crop raising because the intensive crop grew well in the cooler growing season among stumps and light soils of freshly cleared land. Profit margins remained low, however, owing to overproduction from so much similar land in use elsewhere. Farmers felt these problems in several Norwegian settlements, located as they were in the southern part of the cutover where farms occupied only 50 percent of the land.¹⁴

Perhaps most remarkable, however, no single settlement characteristic or combination of characteristics that I examined, exerted any but minimal impact on Norwegian-Americans' vote in Wisconsin. This is unlike their counterparts in Iowa or Minnesota, where the combined effect of five individual characteristics that corresponded most closely to the vote for governor often explained one-third or more of the voting differences between settlements.

This seems to indicate that, in Wisconsin, a settlement's prominent economic or cultural characteristics less heavily affected the vote than did perhaps the unsettling features of shifting issues and newspaper influence, uneven local leadership, and struggles between Republican factions.

In Wisconsin, therefore, nationality and religion--the great ethnocultural influences in American politics--held Norwegian settlements safe within the Republican party during the progressive years.¹⁵ But socio-economic distinctions helped determine the level of their support for the party. Most year-in/year-out voting differences reflected socioeconomic conditions and, probably, differing political circumstances, while brief but tumultuous contests occasionally flared up over nationality or anti-Catholic feelings that pitted Norwegians against others in the Republican party.¹⁶

Under normal circumstances a combination of the Republican party label with the personal popularity of LaFollette proved irresistible to most Wisconsin Norwegians. But it was important to the progressive cause that it avoid the cross-currents of Yankee versus immigrant, rural versus urban, Catholic versus Protestant and other intensely felt cultural antagonisms that animated nineteenth century political life. Occasionally one or

another of these issues ripped the LaFollette ship loose from its coalition moorings and progressive Republicanism floundered.

III

A case in point occurred in Trempealeau County during the period 1906-1908, when large numbers of Norwegian-Americans abandoned LaFollette, and his influence among them waned. Under the collective force of ethnic discontent, political miscalculation and local circumstance, several Norwegian settlements not only turned against LaFollette's choice for governor, but turned out of office his trusted Norwegian assemblyman, Speaker Herman L. Ekern.

It is difficult to sort out the full complement of background influences that precipitated the Trempealeau County defection. But there are certain things we can say of it. Most importantly, the picture becomes far less blurred when we focus on the course of local political rivalry as it converged with local and statewide trends to shape issues that aroused latent sources of voter interest.

Political lines in Trempealeau County generally reflected the particular mix of people who settled there.¹⁷ Migration into the county occurred mainly during the 1860's and 1870's, moving in a northwesterly direction. Native-American and British-born settlers, the earliest arrivals,

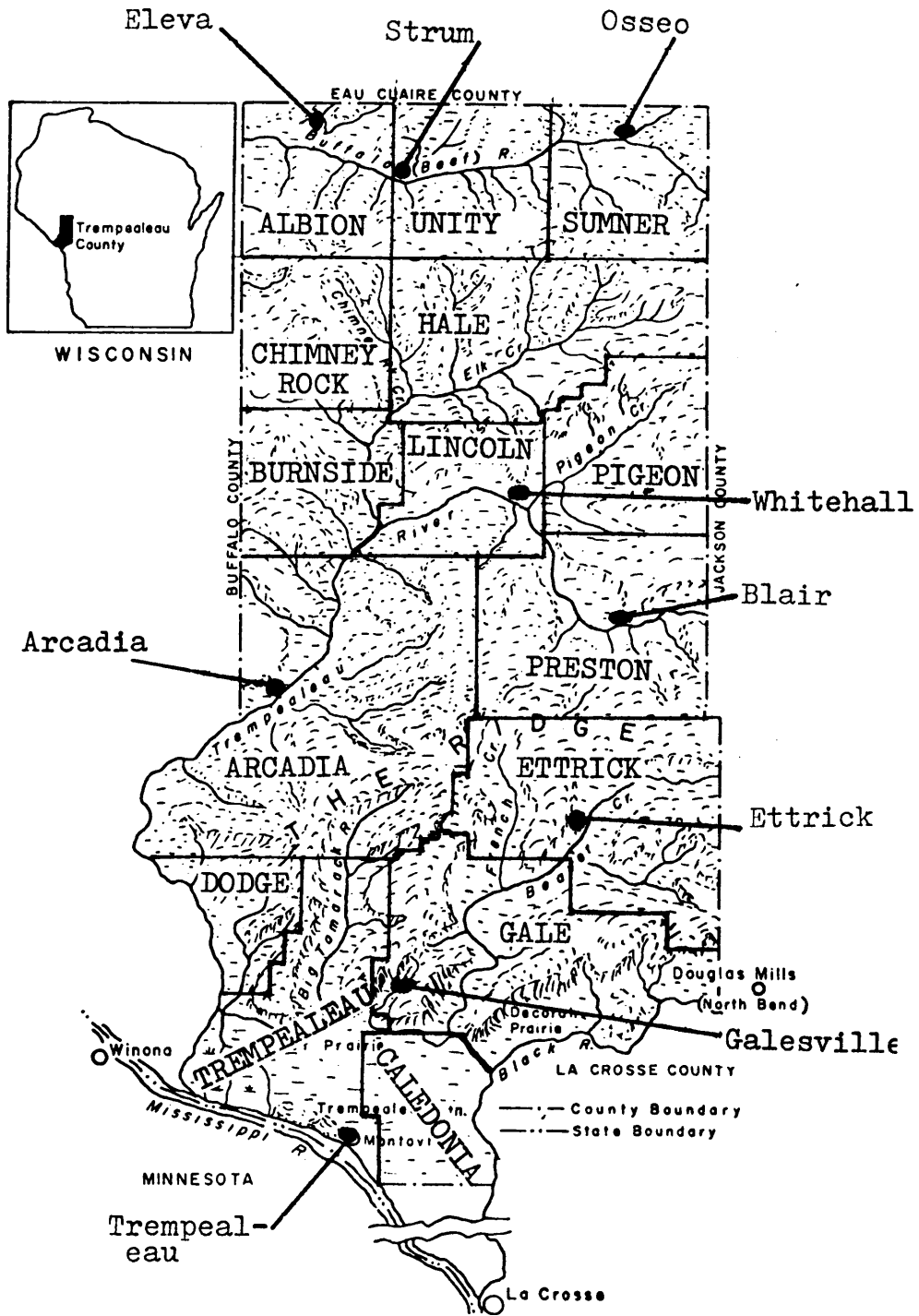


Figure 18. Trempealeau County, Wisconsin.

laid out farms and villages on the fertile Trempealeau and Decorah prairies to the south. In their politics, this section came to lean toward conservative, "stalwart" Republicanism. Geographic features reinforced a sense of political distinction between this section and the remainder of the county, in that a series of limestone bluffs known as "the Ridge" ran between them. Local rivalry persisted throughout this time between the citizens of earlier settled townships south of the Ridge and newcomers to the north. This rivalry showed itself particularly during county conventions in the close attention that older towns such as Galesville and Trempealeau paid to retaining privileges in candidate selection. By the sixties, Catholic Bohemians and Poles were also crowding into the Pine Creek and Arcadia area of southwestern Trempealeau County, their greatest concentration being in Dodge Township along the Trempealeau River. Here the Democratic party found a reliable base of support.

But by far the largest group, and the major source of Trempealeau Republicanism, were the Norwegians. Filtering into the county's eastern and northern reaches along its timbered valleys and hillsides, they outnumbered all other groups by the late 1870's. Important Norwegian settlements took shape in the Trempealeau Valley near Blair, along the north branch of Beaver Creek in Ettrick Township, and in

the large fertile Pigeon Creek Valley farther to the north. Norwegian-born settlers also established Eleva and Sumner along the Buffalo River in the far northern townships. Numerous migrants from eastern districts of Norway tended to concentrate in central and northern parts of the county, while along Beaver Creek--in southeastern Trempealeau--a community of settlers originating from Hardanger in western Norway made up much of Ettrick Township's population. The heavy Norwegian presence soon made them the centerpiece of Republican dominion in the county.

Achieving their due political recognition was not an immediate matter in Trempealeau County's "democratic" political system, however. For "behind the party conclaves," as historian Merle Curti acknowledges, "a small group of county leaders planned strategy" and served as Trempealeau's major multi-term officeholders.¹⁸ But although this inner "cohesive and enduring" group of six or seven prominent farmers, lawyers and businessmen controlled the county's power structure, politically they could not ignore for long rapid increases in the population of new groups in the county. As leaders among the newcomers emerged, the inner circle of party wheelhorses needed to admit them at least into "party councils and give them patronage and political favors."¹⁹ By the late

1870's local Republican leadership had been moved to accommodate growing Norwegian strength. Under the guiding hand of such Norwegian immigrant spokesmen as the well-to-do merchant Peter Ekern of Pigeon, and the leading merchant and mill-owner in Ettrick, Iver Pederson, Norwegians by 1880 attained representative influence in the county's political structure.²⁰ These two immigrant leaders continued throughout the decade to play a strong role in Republican party circles. But thereafter, forceful individual Norwegian leadership in politics ebbed until Herman L. Ekern rose to lead LaFollette's cause in the county during the decade beginning in 1898.

A new political order emerged in the 1890's when the educated offspring of Trempealeau's early settlers entered county politics. Coinciding with the rise of Republican party factionalism in the state, this emerging generation met an unaccustomed variety of political opportunities. Three men in particular stepped to the forefront in Trempealeau County, each having recently completed his training in the law. Two of them, John C. Gaveney and Robert S. Cowie, became the spokesmen for non-progressives who dominated Republican organizations in the southern and central townships. The third, Herman L. Ekern, proceeded to harness the votes of his Norwegian countrymen.

The eloquent John Gaveney returned from a brief residence at Stevens Point in 1890 to manage the substantial interests of his Irish-born father's estate and begin a law practice in Arcadia.²¹ Of course, young Gaveney's marriage in 1890 to the daughter of state Republican "Boss" Elisha W. Keyes undoubtedly whetted his political appetite. But the political ambitions of the twenty-seven-year-old lawyer remained dormant until Robert Cowie's arrival in 1894. Cowie, of Scottish ancestry, became Gaveney's law partner upon graduating from law school. Having grown up in nearby Buffalo County, Cowie's association with Gaveney and his marriage in 1897 to the daughter of John Melby, a protege of local Norwegian leader Iver Pederson, soon made him a leading citizen of Trempealeau County. Together, Cowie and Gaveney assumed leadership of conservative Republican elements in the county. The energetic Gaveney served as state senator from 1901 to 1905 while Cowie held a variety of public positions, including the county district attorney (1898-1902), a deputy auditor's post with the U.S. Naval Department (1903-1905), and county judge (1906-1909).²²

Meanwhile, Herman L. Ekern assumed leadership of Trempealeau County's progressives.²³ A nephew of Peter Ekern, the Pigeon Falls merchant who earlier dominated Norwegian political affairs in the county, Herman Ekern,

became in 1894 county district attorney--the same year that he graduated from the University of Wisconsin law school. He also entered law practice in partnership with an earlier school teacher of his, the respected Norwegian-born Hans A. Anderson of Whitehall. To most Herman Ekern might have seemed a quiet and analytical, even passive, man, but Anderson saw in him an ambitious tireless youth who possessed "a remarkable keenness for system and details" that he lacked.²⁴ Serving as district attorney until 1898, when Cowie moved into the position,²⁵ Ekern returned to full-time private law practice until his election in 1902 as a progressive Republican member of the State Assembly. This position he held through 1908, the last year of which he acted in the capacity of speaker. A devoted lieutenant of Robert M. LaFollette, Ekern played a leading role in guiding "progressive" legislation through the Assembly. During these years he became most widely known for his service both as a member and special counsel of the Wisconsin Insurance Investigation Committee, which between 1905 and 1907 delved into insurance company practices in the state.

Before 1902 general sentiment for LaFollette prevailed throughout Trempealeau County with little obvious factional division of the kind taking shape in state politics. Local ambitions and traditional local rivalry predominated. A

county delegation might be sent to the state convention in support of LaFollette, while conservatives shared in holding county and legislative offices and participating in party affairs. But this is not to say that county politics continued to be the same as in five years past.

The strident message of LaFollette progressivism within the party had tightened local political relations. By 1898, non-LaFollette elements showed signs of coalescing. The same year that Ekern and J. B. Beach (county Republican chairman) accompanied a solid Trempealeau delegation for LaFollette to the state convention, the balance of the county slate shifted emphasis toward nominees from Arcadia and other townships south of the Ridge. Most prominent among these new faces appeared that of Robert Cowie as Republican nominee for district attorney.²⁶

But 1900 proved to be the actual turning point, when the reins of control passed to conservatives. Robert Cowie not only gained re-nomination as district attorney, he also replaced editor J. B. Beach of the influential Whitehall Times-Banner as chairman of the county central committee, a position the editor had held for fourteen years.²⁷ Perhaps more importantly, Cowie's partner, John Gaveney, beat Ekern's law partner, Hans A. Anderson, in a heated race for nomination as state senator. Strong

feelings lingered from the fight and visibly affected the November vote when Gaveney's name was scratched from GOP ballots in some of the northern townships, especially Whitehall. From this point on, statewide politics encouraged a widening of the local rift; contending Republican forces in Madison worked hard to secure local allies as their party split between those for LaFollette--the progressives--and those opposed to him--the stalwarts.²⁸

Consequently, Ekern and other LaFollette men soon joined in common cause. Ekern was their recognized leader, J. B. Beach served as the chief editorial spokesman of local LaFollette progressivism and game warden E. L. Immell hustled about the county keeping progressive political fences in shape. Like LaFollette in his detailed concern for tight organization as a means of defeating those who frustrated reform programs, Ekern and his friends quietly but effectively put together an efficient political organization--one aimed at harnessing the full participation of Norwegian voters.²⁹

Launching their counterattack in 1902, progressives swept all but two precincts in caucuses to select delegates to the state gubernatorial convention. But conservative resistance stiffened in the fall convention to nominate GOP candidates for county offices. Robert

Cowie successfully gained re-nomination for district attorney, but was forced to give over his chairmanship of the Republican county committee to a non-Norwegian LaFollette man from Arcadia Village. And only a couple of other stalwarts secured nomination for lesser offices. As one conservative editor put it, "The strife for offices was not of the friendly kind, and only the years to come will heal some of the wounds."³⁰

The most bitter contest of the convention occurred between Herman Ekern and the aging but prominent Republican delegate from Galesville, Captain Alex Arnold, over the assemblyman's seat. Recognizing the wind to be blowing strongly toward LaFollette, the wily Arnold, a perennial officeholder, declared himself for Governor LaFollette on the one hand and, on the other, for the re-election of conservative U.S. Senator John C. Spooner. But Ekern and the editor of the Whitehall Times-Banner effectively countered Arnold's transparent pseudo-progressivism by contending that Ekern would have to be elected if the platform's reform pledges were to be effectively carried out. Conservatives denounced such tactics as amounting to an insulting assertion that Captain Arnold's pledge "is not to be relied upon," but it was fruitless--Ekern's friends had the delegates to win.³¹

The year 1902 marked the high point of LaFollette strength in the county. By the time caucuses convened in late spring of 1904 to select delegates to the Republican state gubernatorial convention, non-LaFollette forces successfully re-captured eleven of the twenty-four townships, compared to only two that they had managed to win in 1902. Heavily Norwegian areas all held solid to Governor LaFollette, although his support slipped elsewhere.³²

With local prospects brightening, Trempealeau's conservative newspaper editors confidently claimed that the people had had enough. They alleged that only indifference and disgust with politics lay in the wake of "four years of turmoil." The alleged high expenses of LaFollette's administration had "let daylight in and the aroma out," wrote the editor of the Galesville Republican who further remarked that reform in this administration "is not found on the bargain counters."³³

Despite such bravado, conservatives' leadership in the county was not what it had been. The most energetic and popular of their number, Robert Cowie, had recently resigned as district attorney to accept an appointment arranged by Senator Spooner to be deputy auditor in Washington, D.C. And Senator Gaveney could do little for others, as he was busy defending himself against

LaFollette's determined effort to oust him and other major legislative opponents. Trempealeau County conservatism had lost its cutting edge.

Perhaps to compensate for this, anti-LaFollette papers pressed their attack in more personal terms. They branded the county's progressive leaders "a blind trio" of shouters for LaFollette. Specifically, so they asserted, Assemblyman Ekern, editor J. B. Beach and game warden Immell had become a "self constituted trio of political dictators," marking non-LaFollette politicians for slaughter. An important local conservative warned:

We have not forgotten, nor neither have the people generally, how the party rose up and dethroned J. B. Beach a few years ago [i.e., 1900].

Ekern is a young man of good character and average ability. He has had much of the fruit that has fallen from the party tree and done but little to merit it. We think we can give him some good advice, however, and that is to frankly act the part that he so constantly talks. If he dislikes political machines let him avoid the company of men who have no other occupation than running political machines. Let him treat with consideration men who have been Republicans before he was born.³⁴

But the fever of Trempealeau County factionalism changed few minds--the well organized Norwegian voters saw little in the speeches of Ekern and LaFollette that did not conform to their own views. With Cowie gone and Gaveney thrown on the defensive,³⁵ the progressive-dominated county convention passed quietly. The editor of the Galesville Republican was reduced to lamenting how,

unlike earlier conventions in which every delegate had a voice, "since we have been reformed" Ekern himself now "selects the candidates and tells the people's representatives that he has orders from Madison to name this particular slate."³⁶ Progressives easily carried all the Norwegian precincts and most other of the county's rural sections in the November election.

IV

Herman L. Ekern's political career never looked brighter as the Assembly convened in 1905. Like LaFollette, he had swamped his Democratic opponent in the recent election, attracting nearly three-fourths of the county's ballots cast. And his steadfast loyalty found its measure of reward--the youthful assemblyman was elevated to the chairmanship of the important judiciary committee.

Simultaneously, few voters of Wisconsin were surprised when Governor LaFollette achieved election as United States Senator to succeed the stalwart faction's candidate, Senator Quarles. Conservatives had fought to prevent it by defeating the governor at the polls in November, but failing in this, they simply awaited his inevitable selection by the 1905 legislature. With LaFollette now Senator, voters numbed and weary after

seven years of constant political warfare hoped a time of peace lay at hand, but such hopes soon evaporated.

James O. Davidson, the lieutenant governor, now succeeded LaFollette to the governor's chair.³⁷ But before this popular Norwegian-American had even assumed office, he could see that his chances for sitting in the executive chair very long were slim. For although LaFollette was now turning his interest to Washington, he and his political intimates were determined to retain their leadership in Wisconsin politics. And in sizing up the prospects for exerting effective control from afar, LaFollette examined "Yim" Davidson and found him an embarrassment. He judged him to be not enough of a militant, too amiable, perhaps, with more than a touch of naivete. Davidson's "shortcomings" as governor, in the view of one Norwegian-American advisor to LaFollette, were painfully obvious:

It pervades the atmosphere about him. You can feel it. It was especially noticeable when the delegations from Rock appeared last week. I just looked in and withdrew, but Jim had sunk back into the chair the very personification of insignificance and nonentity. I felt humiliated at the sight.³⁸

Consequently, he concluded, "the impression will go out that he is not quite big enough for the position, and that that view will increase the longer he remains." But this rationale simply reinforced decisions already made: speaker of the house, Irvine L. Lenroot, an energetic

young lawyer of Swedish background, they decided should be Wisconsin's progressive governor.

A better mix for disaster could have been devised by neither stalwart nor Democrat. To Wisconsin's Norwegians, James Davidson represented not merely a popular reformer, but a symbol of Norwegian aspirations in America. Plain-living, modest and likable, he had attained the highest political office in Wisconsin yet held by one of their kind. Furthermore, the man selected to challenge Davidson was a Swede--this replacement coming at precisely a moment back in Scandinavia when relations between Norway and Sweden seemed poised at the brink of war owing to Norway's recent declaration of independence from Swedish union. In any event, in ignoring the ethno-cultural realities that underlay their early victories in the state, LaFollette's inner circle focused on elevating the right kind of leader, a man who would continue to keep Wisconsin reform ideas alive.

Former Congressman Nils P. Haugen, a Norwegian-American confidant of LaFollette, warned the Senator that supporting Lenroot over Davidson was folly and reminded him it would be "at least unwise, yes, ungrateful, to deny him a reelection, of which he was reasonably assured, if nominated."³⁹ But signs of Davidson's intended fate were not long in coming, although he himself showed no intention

to step down. In June of 1905, a short time after Davidson had assumed the governorship, his colleagues in the lower house hailed Speaker Lenroot as the next governor, presenting him with a chair and couch suitable to high office. And the following February, in hopes that Davidson might be induced quietly to remove himself, Lenroot vigorously entered the primary contest before Davidson had publicly announced his candidacy.⁴⁰ The issue was now joined in the state's Republican primary, with Lenroot and Davidson openly competing for progressive voting support.

If these developments disturbed some progressives, they positively delighted conservatives. Heretofore resentful and brooding, the conservatives of Trempealeau County grasped this unexpected political opportunity and rushed full tilt to Davidson's defense. The editor of the Galesville Republican, relishing the chance to cut Ekern down to size, spewed out facts and rumors to see whom they might splatter. Why, he asked,

does Ekern hasten to climb onto the Lenroot wagon? He knows that Trempealeau County prefers Davidson to Lenroot. If he had any regard for his constituents or for Davidson, he would wait a bit before chasing around in the interests of Lenroot.⁴¹

He repeated rumors that Ekern's efforts to carry the county for Lenroot might endanger the "congressional bee buzzing in the covering of his auburn locks." And chiding Ekern as the administration's pet who had been exceedingly

lucky in politics, the paper mockingly allowed that "If he can convince the Norwegians of this county that they should support Lenroot in preference to one of their own countrymen, it must be admitted that he is clever rather than lucky."⁴² Publicly, Herman Ekern appeared unruffled. Whether out of personal promises made to Lenroot and LaFollette or out of a sincere belief that Davidson should be ousted, Ekern expressed himself devoted to supporting the most capable man for the job, Irvine Lenroot.

The sting of reaction from the local conservative press was far from deadly. But Ekern could ill afford to take lightly negative opinions of the leading Norwegian language newspaper circulated in Wisconsin, the Chicago Skandinaven. Since 1892 Nicolay A. Grevstad had been editor-in-chief and his remarkable mastery of English, his journalistic skills, past legal training and high position on the Skandinavian brought him wide respect and influence. Beyond his attentiveness to Wisconsin politics, Grevstad was a trusted confidential advisor to Minnesota's Senator Knute Nelson.⁴³ The Skandinaven had generously supported LaFollette and his reform administration and Wisconsin's progressive in turn, recognized it as a major asset in their favor. But when the editor caught a whiff of LaFollette's move to dump Davidson, he quickly threw the journal's considerable regional weight behind Davidson and

denounced the shabby actions of LaFollette and his lieutenants. Fortunately for Ekern, the Skandinaven's editor vented much of his spleen at Lenroot and gubernatorial politics, but Ekern was not altogether spared. His political contacts in Trempealeau County worried about the Chicago newspaper's position, one candid informant noting that there were "several things that work against you, among which is your pronounced stand for Lenroot, and the policy of the Skandinaven, said paper being largely circulated here and its teachings taken as gospel truth."⁴⁴ Ekern privately admitted that "the influence of the Skandinaven is very hard to overcome." He had recently, indeed, had little success dictating its editor's specific political positions, even with regard to himself. Although he had "answered much of their legal correspondence for some time without any pay," Ekern complained to a friend, "they have ignored even those [newspaper articles submitted] in my behalf."⁴⁵

Notwithstanding the Skandinaven's influence, Ekern brought a share of his problems upon himself. Instead of quietly accepting the criticism and waiting for the storm to pass, he added to its fury by openly answering back. In early June, 1906, for instance, he wrote an article for the Milwaukee Free Press strongly endorsing Lenroot as the man best able to carry on LaFollette's plans and

policies. Stressing that ethnocultural loyalties should have no place in voters' decisions, he went on to minimize Davidson's reform spirit by suggesting that the governor was conducting "a harmony campaign, a mere struggle for office in which no matter of principle is at stake." To this article the Skandinaven responded with special energy, noting that

Mr. Ekern makes a plea for the nomination of Irvine L. Lenroot as the republican candidate for governor, but Senator LaFollette is the beginning and end of his article. It would seem that . . . the question is not what manner of man the people want or the state needs at the time, but what Senator LaFollette needs and wants.

The Norwegians did not march into the LaFollette camp; he came into their camp. Effective public control of railroads and other corporations, equal taxation, unhampered popular control of nominations and elections, etc.--these and other reforms were firmly established in the fatherland of the Norwegians long before Mr. LaFollette entered public life. The Norwegians of Wisconsin have fought with LaFollette . . . because they have found him to be a fearless foe of public abuses, an able champion of things that should be done, a fighter of skill and courage, a man to lead a fight in the field and win it. They still expect good work from him, and will stand by him so long as he is true to the people, to himself and the cause of representative government--but no further. His unfortunate interference in the orderly contest for governor the Norwegians of Wisconsin, in common with other self respecting citizens, regard as impertinent bossism that is not to be tolerated.⁴⁶

Newspaper reaction like this--and it was echoed by the normally pro-LaFollette Blair Press in Trempeleau County--hardly helped Ekern's position, but he stuck with Lenroot nonetheless, refusing to bend.

Trempealeau County conservatives quietly organized a campaign to destroy Ekern's local strength. Robert Cowie, now returned from Washington, D.C. as newly elected county judge, met secretly with John Gaveney and other local conservatives at nearby Winona, Minnesota to work up an effective opposition to Ekern.⁴⁷ They settled on backing Dr. George Hildershide for assemblyman, a known LaFollette supporter but also a Davidson man. Cowie and his friends recognized that if they openly opposed Ekern, it would only help redirect the issue away from his unholy alliance with Lenroot to oppose Governor Davidson and toward the familiar "progressives-versus-stalwart" tone of Wisconsin political warfare, in which progressivism usually triumphed. So assuming a low profile, they worked to feed Norwegian disenchantment over the Davidson-Lenroot primary battle. This strategy properly frustrated Herman Ekern's desire to see the Norwegian-American governor tarred with the stalwart brush. "I wish we could get some positive proof of the combination between Cowie and the Conner-Davidson headquarters," complained Lenroot's campaign manager to Ekern. "If we could get it out that they were trying to defeat you it would just about win this fight."⁴⁸ Ekern grumbled in reply that "Judge Cowie is very quiet about his opposition to me and I cannot find that any of the Davidson leaders are doing so openly."⁴⁹

Nevertheless, despite Ekern's uneasiness, he still possessed strong advantages over the opposition. His prestigious membership in LaFollette's circle of close advisors remained fundamental, since many local Norwegians took great pride in the fact that one of their own from the vicinity was so closely associated with the nationally renowned progressive leader. Of equal importance, Ekern's local opponent was neither of Norwegian background nor from the Norwegian-American part of the county. Furthermore, although Governor Davidson twice visited the county, he never directly encouraged Ekern's punishment at the polls. LaFollette, on the contrary, appeared openly on the assemblyman's behalf at Blair, where anti-Ekern sentiment persisted among Norwegians. Finally, the assemblyman himself aggressively canvassed the county and maintained his tightly knit organization intact.⁵⁰

Such advantages enabled Ekern to defeat his opponent in the primary and to overcome the Democratic candidate in the general election of 1906. Despite uncertainty, and Governor Davidson's victory over Lenroot at the state level, Ekern had managed to retain a comfortable majority of Trempeleau County's Republican strength. The extra measure of support customarily received from Norwegian townships had evaporated, however, for his strength averaged 58 percent in the county's Norwegian townships as

well as in the county at large. This was not, of course, a percentage to be sneered at, but it was not the "solid" Norwegian Republicanism of yesteryear. Most pronounced had been desertions from Ekern in Norwegian townships containing villages. Voters in Albion Township, containing Eleva Village, gave Ekern only one-fourth their ballots and he obtained a bare majority in the township surrounding Blair Village. Ekern also drew consistently less support than did Governor Davidson from Norwegian townships.⁵¹ Only in Pigeon Township, where lived his locally influential relatives, and in adjoining Hale Township, did Ekern's efforts mobilize even a quarter of the Republican vote for Irving Lenroot.

V

Between 1906 and 1908 Herman Ekern, rewarded by his heroic factional loyalty to LaFollette in the difficult Lenroot-Davidson fight, was encouraged to expand his role in state politics. The three-term assemblyman succeeded Lenroot to the speakership of the general assembly and figured prominently in the enactment of legislation in 1907 to regulate insurance companies--legislation that had grown out of the earlier committee investigations for which he had served as chief counsel. He also became preoccupied with managing the 1908 presidential bid by

Senator LaFollette. These statewide duties, however, left him less and less opportunity to keep his political affairs in order back home where his foes stood ready to capitalize on potential grievances.

By the spring of 1908, interested conservatives began to probe Ekern's neglected local defenses. Playing on the theme that Ekern paid little heed to the needs of Trempealeau County, they tried to characterize him as aloof and so preoccupied with larger matters that he no longer listened "to the lesser things to which a member of the country districts is expected at all times to give ear."⁵² In a similar vein, the conservative press took Ekern to task for supporting LaFollette's financial backer, Isaac Stephenson, over their popular local Congressman, John Esch, to succeed Spooner in the U.S. Senate. Yet another theme they played upon constantly was that three terms in office was enough--for Ekern to ask for more would be nothing less than insatiable greed in pursuit of office. On occasion they also hinted that Ekern took only lukewarm interest in legislation of interest to farmers in the American Society of Equity, a power in Wisconsin. But most important for Norwegian communities, they took continued delight in reviving memories of Ekern's opposition to Governor Davidson.⁵³

Ekern's greatest danger, however, stemmed not from the conservative press, but from a new figure in Trempeleau politics. The sixth of eight children raised on a farm near Blair within the settlement of west Norwegians in Ettrick Township, Albert T. Twesme had worked his way through the University of Wisconsin and now had established a flourishing law practice in Galesville. He had also demonstrated a flair for public speaking and widened his acquaintance in politics as a clerk in the 1907 Assembly.⁵⁴ Twesme's political credentials appeared impeccable to Norwegian voters. He had after all delivered speeches on Governor Davidson's behalf in several districts during the 1906 campaign. Such qualities soon caught the attention of local conservatives anxious to loosen the grip that Ekern and his progressive organization had on the Norwegian settlements.⁵⁵

Probably to forestall insinuations that stalwarts were booming his candidacy, Twesme announced his decision to run for assemblyman to the Blair Press which published it instead of Twesme's hometown Galesville Republican. Even so, the editor of the progressive Whitehall Times-Banner immediately suggested that Twesme might in fact be an unreconstructed stalwart.⁵⁶ Twesme aggressively commenced to canvass the county, vocalizing the theme that Trempeleau County should be represented by a man in touch

with the popular Jim Davidson.⁵⁷ At the same time he shied away from any association with local stalwarts. The "not too radical ones," wrote one of Ekern's informants, are being approached by Twesme "on the argument that you have had three terms and then you have the gall to ask for more."⁵⁸ The conservative editor of the Galesville Republican took delight in terming the contest "one of the most interesting political mix-ups in the state today."⁵⁹

Herman Ekern assumed the incumbent's smooth outward pose that Twesme represented no real competition.⁶⁰ But privately he became increasingly concerned as the primary campaign unfolded. The albatross of LaFollette's 1906 effort to dump Davidson continued to drag upon Ekern's prospects, while his forthright but inexpedient pro-county option stance on the liquor question threatened to cost him votes in villages. This is because currently "wet" villages might be forced to close down their saloons if voters decided under county option to make the entire county "dry."⁶¹

He worked hard to shift the ground of the argument to that of the people-versus-the-interests. Sensing his opposition to be better organized than before, he identified the "real" behind-the-scenes enemy as outsiders--the state's liquor interests and the old line insurance

companies still smarting from the regulatory legislation of the previous year. By charging them with interference in local affairs, Ekern hoped to stir public indignation. "It is a question," wrote Ekern, "whether the insurance companies and the brewers shall run this county or whether it shall be run by the folks at home."⁶²

Meanwhile, Twesme toured the Norwegian townships neutralizing his progressive opposition by applauding "the efforts of Senator LaFollette and Governor Davidson to restore to the people the rights usurped by the great aggregations of wealth."⁶³ And conservatives quietly worked to feed the resentments of those who disliked Ekern's county option stance and those whose nationality feelings had been kindled by the Lenroot-Davidson struggle. Now on the defensive, Ekern hung onto the fraying conviction that his stalwart friends were "working the nationality question so hard" that it would produce a backlash effect.⁶⁴

As if not beset by enough difficulties, the young assemblyman faced additional problems toward the close of the primary campaign. Up to this time, both Governor Davidson and Senator LaFollette had remained on the sidelines. But during the campaign's final week Davidson acted indirectly to tip the political scales against Ekern. Judge Cowie had invited the governor to attend an

American Society of Equity picnic at Galesville, promising that

What is done politically or otherwise by reason of your visit will be done in a diplomatic way and that no one can be offended or object to it. In fact Mr. Twesme and myself merely expect that your visit to the county will revive and put new life into the strong Davidson sentiment here and that without saying a word about Ekern on your behalf, the effect will be the same.⁶⁵

Davidson instead chose simply to send his private secretary, Colonel Oliver G. Munson, to the gathering while he appeared that same day at the nearby Mondovi Fair and privately indicated to visiting parties his opposition to Ekern.⁶⁶

Perhaps of even greater importance in the closing days of the primary campaign, a circular mysteriously appeared and made its way among Norwegians at the Farmers' Equity picnic and in various townships on election day. Believed by many to have been put out by the Chicago Skandinaven, its meaning was clear--Norwegians should defeat Ekern and other leading LaFollette men because their election would be detrimental to the political advancement of Governor Davidson and Norwegians generally. The important circular stated in part that

Two years ago for the first time an opportunity arose for one of the Norwegian nationality to occupy the highest position in the state.

Then was made a brutal attack upon our faith. And the attack came from a man whom we Norwegians three times in succession had made governor of the

state and since United States senator. Never has any man in this state been so enthusiastically supported as LaFollette has been by us Norwegians.

There is yet considerable left of admiration for the man, but our faith has been wrecked.

It went on to describe the current political situation as one in which LaFollette was concerned to make his senatorial position more secure by preventing Davidson, the only possibly strong contender, from challenging his reelection. If LaFollette had his way, the circular warned:

With Ekern as speaker in the assembly and John Strange as president in the senate [by virtue of being lieutenant governor], LaFollette will control the legislature in such a manner that there will be little honor for Governor Davidson's administration.

We are so shortsighted in politics, we Norwegians, and besides the feeling of unity is so very weak with us. But we have pledged ourselves to hold up Davidson's arms and we owe it to the state and ourselves to do our duty.

Through Davidson we have, after a generation or more, reached an influence in the state which our intelligence and our never failing faithfulness to principles and morals entitles us to.

LaFollette has put everything at stake. He has brought out as his candidates Davidson's bitterest political enemies: Lenroot, Mahoney, Strange and Ekern.

A vote for Jenkins, Atley Peterson, Trotman and Twesme next Tuesday will grow to thousands of votes in a victory for Davidson two years from now.⁶⁷

The balance of Norwegian public sentiment tipped against Ekern's less well-prepared political effort and he failed to overcome it. Albert Twesme captured 55 percent of the county's Republican primary vote. Ekern still held majorities in the divided Norwegian townships, but with an

average of only 52 percent there, his strength proved insufficient to offset his lower support elsewhere. This represented a further decline of 5 percentage points from the Norwegian vote he had obtained during the troublesome 1906 primary. Once again Norwegian townships differed considerably in their enthusiasm for Ekern. Over two-thirds of the combined vote in the towns and villages of Albion, Ettrick and Unity went to Twesme while Ekern commanded nearly three-fourths of the combined votes of Pigeon, Hale and Chimney Rock townships.

Deep concern filled the Ekern camp. His personal hurt over the voters' decision mingled with resentment against those who had done it. Only a short time ago the young Speaker of the Assembly had generated LaFollette's national presidential campaign. Now even his desire to speak for Trempealeau County eluded him. Having believed that progressive candidates would naturally succeed once a direct primary existed to negate the acts of the special interests, he now faced the fact that the primary also could be used to progressivism's disadvantage. But at this moment peevishness more than generosity of motive dominated Ekern's camp. The people had been attracted to the opposition, they concluded, only by an appeal to their lower political instincts--prejudice and erratic

resentments. The question turning over in Ekern's mind, however, was what should he do now?

VI

Talk soon began that Ekern would not easily accept defeat.⁶⁸ This struck close to the truth, for Ekern promptly wrote to LaFollette, pouring out his suspicions that brewers, the Society of Equity, short-sighted anti-fourth-term attitudes, and Governor Davidson had combined to bring him down. Moreover, he asserted, "The Stalwart papers in the county and outside, including the Chicago Skandinaven, have been pounding the people here quite strong on my opposition to Davidson and there is no question that this [Norwegian] circular had some influence."⁶⁹

Some of Ekern's allegations did have basis in fact, such as the confidential opposition of Governor Davidson. An outside representative of the liquor interests had also done some work in the county, and Democrats in the western part of Trempeleau had been urged by liquor men to vote as Republicans against Ekern. But notwithstanding his assertions, no subsequent evidence supported his allegation that the insurance companies had taken a hand in Trempeleau County politics and only slim indications surfaced that the Society of Equity seriously opposed his re-nomination.⁷⁰

Outraged pride and factional spirit brought Ekern, LaFollette, Lenroot and others together in Madison the following week. Incensed about the defeat of LaFollette's lieutenant and suspicious that Governor Davidson had made a calculated effort to discredit the Senator and displace his supporters, they concluded that Herman Ekern had no choice but to challenge Twesme as an independent in the general election.⁷¹ To mount such a challenge, however, presented special problems. Three in particular needed to be met. First, how could Ekern re-ignite his fading Norwegian support while reducing both Governor Davidson's magnetic appeal among his countrymen and Twesme's pro-Davidson image? Second, he needed to explain why the outcome of the Trempealeau primaries should be disregarded, thereby repudiating the intent of the primary law that he himself had been so active in framing. Finally, Ekern knew his independent candidacy might cost him votes because it now lacked the official backing of the Republican party.

A two-stage strategy emerged, based on the central argument that the verdict of the primary should be reversed because his defeat had been brought about by scurrilous methods. The first stage called for Ekern to demonstrate that the people desired his candidacy because of their indignation over the wrong that had been perpetrated. Ekern's friends would carefully canvass the county to amass

a large number of signatures requesting that he run as an independent. Simultaneously, to add credence to his accusations, Ekern would launch a "conspiracy" suit against Twesme and stalwart John C. Gaveney for libel. This would effectively diminish Twesme's image among many Norwegians because, by suing Gaveney and Twesme jointly, Twesme would appear a stalwart by association, the suit, it was hoped, conveying the impression that Gaveney was the power behind Twesme's candidacy. Once Ekern's popular support reawakened, the second stage of the campaign would summon LaFollette to tour Trempealeau's Norwegian towns on Ekern's behalf.⁷²

With no time to lose, Ekern's friends earnestly began their campaign to reverse the result of the primary. By the last week of September they had harvested over fifteen hundred signatures. But Ekern then postponed announcing his independent candidacy until October 20 so that the intervening two weeks could be used to mold public opinion around his libel hearing.

At his day in court, Ekern charged that Twesme and Gaveney had induced the editor of the Arcadia Leader to publish a story that Ekern's vote for Isaac Stephenson to be United States senator had been rewarded with a \$1,000 check. This insinuation that he had been paid for his vote, Ekern contended, had damaged his reputation and

contributed to his defeat. The money, Ekern insisted, had only been received as a campaign contribution in his role as secretary of LaFollette's presidential campaign. Twesme freely admitted to having authored the article. The young Galesville lawyer contended that the facts were true; he only intended to show that Stephenson owed LaFollette a large debt for delivering legislative votes such as that of Ekern. The judge ultimately dismissed the case against Gaveney because the former state senator had only paid for the advertisement and was reimbursed by Twesme. The remainder of the legal action was suspended until the following spring.⁷³

With his widely heralded law suit now postponed, Ekern announced his candidacy. Releasing to newspapers a five thousand word statement explaining the action he was taking, it laid down charges with which Norwegians usually sympathized:

A combination of big Life Insurance Companies, the liquor lobby, and candidates for high office, all from outside the district, with local Stalwart leaders, aided by unprincipled Democratic support dominated the primaries.

As proof of outside interference by the brewing interests, Ekern contended, for example, that members of the brewers organization admitted to have put in ten thousand dollars to defeat him. Twesme and the conservative press gleefully ripped into the announcement. "Mr. Ekern must think the

people of the county are fools," exclaimed the editor of the Blair Press. "He might with equal propriety have said also that he was told that the railroads had put in ten thousand dollars and the insurance companies ten thousand dollars for is not one statement just as well supported by evidence as the other."⁷⁴

While the rattle of Ekern and Twesme's charges was not without effect, when Senator LaFollette and Governor Davidson entered the fray, a new and final stage of the battle began. Now the intense county struggle became transformed into a fierce test of strength between Davidson and LaFollette that drew statewide attention. And supremacy in this section of the state boiled down essentially to who could best command the loyalties of Norwegian-American voters.⁷⁵

Traveling through the Norwegian townships in northern Trempealeau a week before the election, Governor Davidson and Twesme appealed to the voters to stand behind the duly elected regular Republican nominee. In his modest, homespun rhetoric, richly infused with west Norwegian dialect, Davidson told the standing-room-only meetings at Strum and Blair that he was not there to interfere in local affairs but only to support the Republican ticket and to uphold the integrity of the primary law. The polished Twesme, on the other hand, aimed his shots

squarely at Ekern, cautioning the audience "not to trust the embittered attacks of a disappointed candidate."⁷⁶

Ekern supporters grew plainly worried. Davidson's presence, one friend confided to Ekern, "may cause us to lose considerable" and he wished that "there was a way to discount the harm he will do."⁷⁷ At the same time they hoped that LaFollette's arrival the next day would effectively reclaim the loyalty of Norwegians.

The fatigued but scrappy Senator, together with Ekern, met enthusiastic though somewhat smaller crowds than had greeted Davidson on his whirlwind trip through the county. The Senator's voice, hoarse from a cold and numerous speaking engagements, nonetheless still carried that magnetic quality that made him a favorite reform spokesman in Norwegian communities. The strenuous schedule involved speeches in Blair, Ettrick and an evening talk at Twesme's hometown, Galesville. Immediately plunging into his subject, LaFollette called his supporters to action. He characterized the primary that nominated Twesme a fraud controlled by special interests. Undoubtedly with Davidson in mind, he intimated that the fight against the praiseworthy Ekern was actually part of a larger fight aimed at his own undoing. The wily campaigner disdainfully dismissed Twesme as merely "the tool of evil," whose libelous acts should cause voters to

"consider the dangerous character of a man who would resort to such means to secure office." Additionally, he charged Democrats with political trickery because usually solid Democratic enclaves (e.g., the predominantly Polish Dodge Township) had suddenly switched to Twesme in the primary. As to the Norwegian circular distributed in Trempealeau County and other Norwegian areas, LaFollette denounced it as "a bigoted and cowardly appeal to national prejudices" put out by the same people who were attacking Ekern. He repeated the same speech at each of the three rallies.⁷⁸

But the end was not yet. Governor Davidson meant to insure that his work would not be nullified and he re-entered the county, appearing this time in Galesville, Ettrick and southern Trempealeau townships.⁷⁹ In response, Ekern's faction reportedly tried but failed to get LaFollette also to return.⁸⁰ Still, Ekern remained confident. "The appeal made by the Governor on account of nationality goes a very long way," he admitted, but he was sure that bringing the governor back into the county amounted to "a confession of their weakness" and that he would have the necessary votes providing his workers could "overcome the party cross."⁸¹

Intense public interest had developed and so too had a mood of bitterness. Twesme accused Ekern of hypocrisy

in courting the anti-saloon vote at the same time that a brother of the editor of the progressive Whitehall Times-Banner "daily made the rounds of the saloons, assuring the keepers and bartenders between drinks that Ekern was against 'County Option'."⁸² The exasperated Blair Press declared Ekern's candidacy "a sham" in which "his greed for office has become chronic and he plays the baby act in his first defeat in a most pitiable way."⁸³ Conversely, rumors spread in Norwegian communities that Twesme had pulled off a crooked advertising scheme in Northfield, Minnesota while a student at the University of Wisconsin. Upon being informed about it, Ekern tried to obtain affidavits from the affected parties during the last days of the contest.⁸⁴ Bitterness had reached the boiling point, according to the Milwaukee Sentinel, "feeling being so strong in some families that brothers do not speak to each other."⁸⁵

By election day much statewide attention focused on Trempealeau County. As with the earlier primary, the outcome was close--but Twesme again narrowly defeated Ekern--this time by a mere 152 votes out of a total Ekern-Twesme vote of 4,172. Once again the people had spoken and found Ekern wanting.

Critical Norwegian townships and villages had, since the primary, swung back only slightly toward Ekern. But

the additional 5 points he picked up there failed to offset losses elsewhere. Even in Norwegian areas, this net gain had occurred only with considerable shifting about in sentiment among various Norwegian communities. Compared to the earlier primary vote, Ekern's support had advanced nearly 10 percentage points in Preston and Unity while failing to hold onto 13 points of previously won gains in both Hale Township and in Ekern's former stronghold of Pigeon Township. As had occurred in the primary, Ekern's poorest showing remained in Twesme's home township, Ettrick, followed by that of the far northern areas.

VII

Examining Herman Ekern's shifting fortunes between 1904 and 1908, we see three indications of the unsettling impact that political events had worked on traditional Norwegian allegiances. For one thing Ekern's vote in elections after 1904 dropped remarkably more in Norwegian townships than it did in the county as a whole. Furthermore, the usual like-minded votes cast by predominately Norwegian civil divisions diverged more from one another in the 1906 and 1908 elections than they had in 1904. Finally, the average turnout rates of Norwegian townships during the 1906-1908 period exceeded that of the county as a whole, thus demonstrating their intensified interest in

the political struggle. LaFollette and his protege Ekern had inadvertently spawned general Norwegian defections by the nationality issues that erupted from their efforts to replace Governor Davidson. Under such circumstances Norwegian solidarity buckled and fell apart. That individual Norwegian townships failed to react uniformly, however, merits attention.

Anti-Ekern feeling seems to have arisen not from any one particular social, cultural or geographic segment of the county's Norwegian areas. While economic differences among settlements appear to have mattered little, his support slipped to a greater extent in the more recently settled Norwegian townships of northern Trempealeau County than in those to the south. This meant perhaps that nationality issues touched a more sensitive nerve in newer Norwegian settlements, working against Ekern and LaFollette's political desires when they conflicted with those of Governor Davidson.

Ekern may also have drawn stronger support from what I term the more Americanized Norwegian communities. These were townships settled by a mix of people originating both from East and West Norway who tended to overcome dialect barriers by abandoning Norwegian more quickly in favor of English. When we examine Trempealeau County in such terms, the more linguistically mixed (Americanized) townships

averaged almost 7 percentage points less favorable to Davidson in the 1906 primary than did the tradition-perpetuating ones where similar dialects predominated.⁸⁶

Evidently village and countryside areas also divided in their attraction to LaFollette's socio-economic rhetoric and Ekern's county-option stance. For while six out of ten voters in rural Norwegian precincts cast their ballots for Ekern in the 1906 primary, less than four in ten voted for him in Blair and Eleva Villages.

But far more significant in producing differences, was the impact of local political circumstances over either social or economic concerns.

Personal rivalries, family associations, newspaper editorial positions, the intensity of political organization and the host of other influences that made up a local township's situation--these were what muted or enhanced the force of statewide politics by a few percentage points or more. Ekern's family ties in the central county townships helped make these his principal strongholds. He also counted on his professional and personal associations with such men as his law partner in Whitehall, the highly respected H. A. Anderson. And for direct political support, he could depend on his connection with J. B. Beach, the long time county Republican leader and editor of the county seat paper, the Whitehall Times-Banner.

Similar ties to influential local Norwegians were also maintained on the other side by Albert Twesme and conservative Judge Cowie. Personal political qualities also influenced voters differently from one locality to another. Ekern, though gifted with a knack for political organization and legislative maneuvering, remained hamstrung with political inflexibility due to his devotion to LaFollette. This made him insensitive to differences among his local critics, all of whom he tended to label "stalwarts." In the northeastern township of Sumner and Osseo Village, for instance, people resented Ekern's attacks against local attorney Glenn O. Linderman because, despite the attorney's stalwart affiliations, he was "looked up to as a good Republican and highly respected by all."⁸⁷

If the weight of local political circumstances proved important in only local contests, they might not be worth noting. But in fact the character of grass roots political organization did make a difference on votes cast in state-wide political contests. We witness it in 1906 where variations in Norwegian precinct votes for Governor Davidson were the opposite of those polled by Ekern. In communities where Ekern was strong, Davidson proved weaker. This probably reflected the uneven strength of Ekern's local political organization, for if Ekern's friends had

not acted on Lenroot's behalf, it is to be expected that Davidson would have carried all heavily Norwegian towns by similar majorities.

Norwegian-Americans of Trempealeau County in 1906 and 1908 had neither rejected LaFollette nor his progressive ideas. But defection did reveal the limits of LaFollette's appeal among them. Although voters appreciated their ardent anti-monopolism, Ekern and his mentor learned that neither anti-trust slogans nor blurry political exhortation could shove national pride and prejudice into the background.

The defection punished those who forgot that Norwegians had aligned themselves with LaFollette not simply because they took seriously his reform position and respected his vigorous leadership, but because they also valued and expected political recognition for their aspiring Norwegian leaders. Ekern erred politically by ignoring these concerns and forthrightly championing Lenroot's candidacy against Davidson. Local conservative leaders such as Judge Cowie ably capitalized on the assemblymen's mistake and, reinforced by unfavorable press reaction, saddled Ekern with an image as one opposed to Davidson. And once Twesme appeared in 1908, the temptation to throw over ideology for ethnocultural retribution proved irresistible to the many who could not understand how the

cause of progressivism would suffer under Davidson, as LaFollette and Ekern suggested.

It took the 1906-1908 debacle before progressives learned that the tail went with the hide--that nationality concerns underlay the course of reform progressivism in Wisconsin. Failure to recognize it had inaugurated a new round of Republican factionalism in the state.

NOTES

¹For general information on the period of progressive movements in each state, I have relied on the following: Herbert F. Margulies, The Decline of the Progressive Movement in Wisconsin, 1890-1920 (Madison, 1968); Roger E. Wyman, "Voting Behavior in the Progressive Era: Wisconsin as a Case Study" (doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1970); Robert C. Nesbit, Wisconsin: A History (Madison, 1973), pp. 399-456; John E. Visser, "William Lloyd Harding and the Republican Party in Iowa, 1906-1920" (doctoral dissertation, University of Iowa, 1957); Leland F. Sage, A History of Iowa (Ames, 1974); Carl H. Chrislock, The Progressive Era in Minnesota, 1899-1918 (St. Paul, 1971); William Watts Folwell, A History of Minnesota (St. Paul, 1926), III.

²Chrislock, Progressive Era in Minnesota, pp. 18-19; Charles B. Cheney, The Story of Minnesota Politics (Minneapolis, 1947), p. 27.

³See Paul Knaplund, Moorings Old and New: Entries in an Immigrant's Log (Madison, 1963), p. 195; Val Bjornson, The History of Minnesota (West Palm Beach, Fla., 1969), I, 435-436; Cheney, Minnesota Politics, pp. 17-18, 35-36, 43; Theodore Christianson, Minnesota: A History of the State and Its People (New York, 1935), II, chap. xvi.

⁴Nesbit, Wisconsin, p. 405.

⁵Robert S. Maxwell, LaFollette and the Rise of the Progressives in Wisconsin (Madison, 1956), p. 60. See also David L. Brye, "Wisconsin Scandinavians and Progressivism, 1900-1950," Norwegian-American Studies: Volume 27 (Northfield, Minn., 1977), 172.

⁶Rasmus B. Anderson, The Life Story of Rasmus B. Anderson (Madison, 1917), p. 617. As one dismayed stalwart politician in Trempealeau County lamented, "The Skandinaven is taken by about every one, and it is their political bible." John C. Gaveney to Elisha Keyes, June 20, 1901, Elisha Keyes Letterbooks, State Historical Society of

Wisconsin, Madison. See also A. N. Freng to Herman Ekern, Aug. 27, 1906, Ekern Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; Margulies, Decline of the Progressive Movement, p. 27.

⁷Robert M. LaFollette, LaFollette's Autobiography: A Personal Narrative of Political Experiences (Madison, 1913), p. 7; Olaf Morgan Norlie, History of the Norwegian People in America (Minneapolis, 1925), p. 502; Maxwell, LaFollette, p. 60; Margulies, Decline of the Progressive Movement, p. 26.

⁸The mean vote of the entire state was as follows: 1881-1898 = 51.4%; 1900-1912 = 51.7%; and 1914-1924 = 54.7%.

⁹The varied Scandinavian response to LaFollette has not gone completely unnoticed. See, for example, Robert R. Dykstra and David R. Reynolds, "In Search of Wisconsin Progressivism, 1904-1952: A Test of the Rogin Scenario," The History of American Electoral Behavior, ed. J. H. Silbey, A. G. Bogue and W. H. Flanigan (Princeton, 1978), pp. 321-322.

¹⁰In an effort to identify variables that asserted considerable influence over the long run in the settlements, I initially examined a variety of cultural and socioeconomic characteristics of Norwegian precincts to see which ones correlated most strongly with Republican votes for governor. This involved computing Pearson Product Moment correlations between votes cast in general elections and twenty-two independent variables on which data could be found for nearly all selected Norwegian precincts. These tabulations showed that only socioeconomic characteristics displayed linear relationships to the election results of $\pm .30$ or greater. Then, probing further, I tried by partial and multiple correlation to determine: (a) the relative impact of five of the most prominent variables when the influence of each on the other is removed, and (b) the extent of the total variation that they collectively explain. Table 11 in Appendix "C" summarizes the findings.

¹¹The five independent variables that demonstrated consistent recurring correlations included, in order of their frequent impact: (1) percent farms being rented by foreign born plus native born or foreign parents; (2) percent value that potatoes comprised of the total

harvested crop; (3) average value per acre; (4) average value per farm; and (5) value of total harvested crops per farm.

¹²Dykstra and Reynolds, "In Search of Wisconsin Progressivism," p. 322; Michael Paul Rogin, The Intellectuals and McCarthy: The Radical Specter (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), p. 69.

¹³W. A. Hartman and J. D. Black, "Economic Aspects of Land Settlement in the Cut-Over Region of the Great Lakes States," United States Department of Agriculture Circular No. 160 (Washington, 1931), 2-3, 27-36.

¹⁴This included Norwegian settlements in the counties of Waupaca, Portage, Shawano, Adams, Jackson and Dunn.

¹⁵See Wyman, "Voting Behavior in the Progressive Era."

¹⁶Examples of when anti-Catholicism affected Norwegian reactions are the 1914 Republican primary race, when progressive forces put up a Catholic for Senator, and in 1918 when Roy P. Wilcox, a Catholic state senator, ran for governor in the Republican primary. See Herbert F. Margulies, "Anti-Catholicism in Wisconsin Politics, 1914-1920," Mid-America, XLIV (1962), 51-56.

¹⁷For pre-1880 development of the county, see Merle Curti et al., Making of an American Community: A Case Study of Democracy in a Frontier County (Stanford, Calif., 1959); also Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge, History of Trempealeau County, Wisconsin (Chicago, 1917).

¹⁸Curti, Making of an American Community, pp. 328, 331, 344, 378, 436. It has been suggested that Curti and others have given insufficient attention to the influence of these small controlling cliques of leaders in frontier communities. See Robert R. Dykstra, "Stratification and Community Political Systems: Historians' Models," Emerging Theoretical Models in Social and Political History, ed. Allan G. Bogue (Beverly Hills, Calif., 1973), pp. 86-87.

¹⁹Curti, Making of an American Community, pp. 104, 321.

²⁰Ibid., p. 341.

²¹Biographical data in Curtiss-Wedge, History of Trempealeau County, pp. 673-676.

²²Ibid., pp. 386-387.

²³Biographical data from Introduction to, and campaign sketches from Herman L. Ekern Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; Albert Erlebacher, "Herman L. Ekern: The Quiet Progressive" (doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1965).

²⁴Erlebacher, "Herman L. Ekern," p. 18.

²⁵After two terms by Ekern, remembering that rotation was the general rule, perhaps Cowie's influential Norwegian friends among his wife's relatives helped press for Cowie to secure the district attorney position.

²⁶On 1898 county politics, see Arcadia (Wisc.) Leader, Aug. 11, Oct. 6, 1898; Galesville (Wisc.) Republican, Oct. 6, 20, Nov. 10, 1898; Trempealeau (Wisc.) Herald, Nov. 4, 1898.

²⁷The largest circulating newspaper, the Whitehall (Wisc.) Times-Banner was located in the county seat and became the major pro-LaFollette paper. Although its clever and cautious editor often straddled divisive issues, he nonetheless remained editorially responsive to the progressive sentiments of the central and northern towns. Leading the conservative press assault was Bert Gipple's boldly written Galesville Republican. Ever since its beginnings in 1897, Gipple needled LaFollette, castigating him as having an unhealthy desire for power and as one who magnified the errors of others while setting himself up as the only honest man in politics. His paper's positions found periodic support from the brash Osseo (Wisc.) Recorder, the Trempealeau Herald, the Arcadia (Wisc.) Arcadian and, in the 1906 campaigns, from the Blair (Wisc.) Press.

²⁸On the 1900 situation in county politics, see Trempealeau Herald, Aug. 10, Sept. 7, Sept. 28, Oct. 5, 1900; Galesville Republican, Jul. 26, Aug. 23, 1900; Arcadia Leader, Sept. 21, Nov. 9, 1900; O. J. Hawkinson to H. L. Ekern, Aug. 22, 1908, Ekern Papers.

²⁹On Ekern's approach to political organization, see Erlebacher, "Herman L. Ekern," pp. 46-50.

³⁰Galesville Republican, Oct. 2, 1902.

³¹Whitehall Times-Banner, quoted in Galesville Republican, Sept. 18, 1902. Gale and Galesville conservatives later claimed Arnold's defeat was due to treacherous trading of votes by which he had been sacrificed by his friends in the southern part of the county. See Galesville Republican, Oct. 2, 1902 for a review of the convention.

³²Trempealeau Herald, May 13, 1904.

³³Galesville Republican, Jul. 21, 1904.

³⁴Letter to editor from F. A. George, Hale Township, in Galesville Republican, Sept. 1, 1904.

³⁵LaFollette went into the county to personally work against his legislative opponent, Senator Gaveney, while Gaveney followed on his heels trying to offset his being branded a political hireling and corporate tool. See Galesville Republican, Nov. 3, 1904.

³⁶Galesville Republican, Oct. 20, 1904.

³⁷Born in the western Norway district of Sogn in 1854, Davidson arrived at age eighteen in Wisconsin. Since 1877 he had resided at Soldiers Grove, a small hamlet in the Mississippi River county of Crawford, where he eventually established a prosperous general merchandise store. After serving in a variety of local public positions, the district's voters elected the likable Norwegian to the State Assembly in 1892. An assemblyman until 1898, Davidson's friendship with the new reform element within the party secured for himself the nomination for state treasurer, a position that he held until 1904 when he became elected lieutenant governor. See James O. Davidson, Scrapbooks of Newspaper Clippings Relating to Wisconsin Politics and Government, 1897-1910, and to Davidson's Governorship, VIII, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison; Galesville Republican, Feb. 22, 1906; Arcadia Leader, Aug. 25, 1898.

³⁸Nils P. Haugen to Robert M. LaFollette, Apr. 2, 1906, Robert M. LaFollette Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison. See also Nils P. Haugen, Pioneer and Political Reminiscences (Evansville, Wisc., 1930), pp. 275-278.

³⁹Haugen, Pioneer and Political Reminiscences, pp. 277-278.

⁴⁰Galesville Republican, June 15, 1905; Margulies, Decline of the Progressive Movement, p. 87.

⁴¹Galesville Republican, Feb. 1, 1906.

⁴²Ibid., May 10, 1906.

⁴³Sigvart Luther Rugland, "The Norwegian Fress of the Northwest" (Master's thesis, State University of Iowa, 1929), pp. 9, 40-41.

⁴⁴A. N. Freng to Ekern, Aug. 27, 1906, Ekern Papers. The political importance of the Skandinaven is noted in Margulies, Decline of the Progressive Movement, p. 27; Maxwell, LaFollette, p. 60; Anderson, Life Story, p. 617.

⁴⁵Ekern to A. N. Freng, Aug. 28, 1906, Ekern Papers.

⁴⁶Chicago (Ill.) Skandinaven, Aug. 1, 1906. For another instance, see Erlebacher, "H. H. Ekern," p. 67.

⁴⁷Ekern to J. E. Holden, Aug. 22, 1906, Ekern Papers.

⁴⁸A. T. Rogers to Ekern, Aug. 16, 1906, Ekern Papers.

⁴⁹Ekern to A. T. Rogers, Aug. 25, 1906, Ekern Papers.

⁵⁰LaFollette had traveled to Blair Village on August 21 to offset strong Davidson sentiment. Perhaps here lived greater proportions of recent Norwegian arrivals, for Ekern commented before the election that he had the support of "the businessmen and about every farmer" while complaining that the younger element was being worked very hard by the opposition. See Ekern to Thomas Herried, Aug. 22, 1906, Ekern Papers. That he may have garnered greater support from those who had made a better go of life in America is also suggested by the somewhat stronger support Ekern received from places with higher average personal property values. Average assessed values for rural townships giving strong support to Ekern were: Pigeon, \$248; Unity, \$249; Hale, \$225. Less support came from: Ettrick, \$213; and Chimney Rock, \$144. Of course, it was to be expected his uncle's family played an

influential role there. Personal property values for the year 1905 in Trempealeau County are derived from Tax Roll records located at the LaCrosse Area Research Center, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁵¹In predominantly Norwegian precincts, Davidson attracted more support than Ekern. The following figures indicate the extra margin of percentage points that Davidson won over Ekern: Albion Township plus Eleva Village, 67 percent; Preston Township plus Blair Village, 35 percent; Ettrick Township and Village, 28 percent; Chimney Rock Township, 25 percent; Unity Township, 17 percent; Hale Township, 4 percent; Pigeon Township, 2 percent.

⁵²Galesville Republican, Apr. 30, 1908. See also, Erlebacher, "H. L. Ekern," p. 142.

⁵³See, for example, Galesville Republican, Aug. 20, 1908.

⁵⁴Erlebacher, "H. L. Ekern," p. 142.

⁵⁵Ekern's opponents recognized Twesme's potential at least as far back as May 17, 1906, when he spoke at a Norwegian independence celebration in Galesville. Galesville Republican, May 17, 1906. For biographical information see Buffalo County (Wisc.) News, quoted in Galesville Republican, July 23, 1908, and Curtiss-Wedge, History of Trempealeau County, pp. 457-458.

⁵⁶Quoted in Galesville Republican, May 21, 1908.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, Jun. 25, 1908.

⁵⁸O. J. Hawkinson to Ekern, Aug. 20, 1908, Ekern Papers.

⁵⁹Galesville Republican, Aug. 13, 1908.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

⁶¹O. J. Hawkinson to Ekern, Aug. 15, 22, 1908, Ekern Papers.

⁶²Ekern to several friends and party workers, Aug. 26, 1908, Ekern Papers; Ekern to O. H. Moe, Aug. 31, 1908, *ibid.*

⁶³Trempealeau Herald, Aug. 21, 1908.

⁶⁴Ekern to Henry Schafer, Aug. 31, 1908, Ekern Papers.

⁶⁵Robert Cowie to James O. Davidson, Aug. 21, 1908, James O. Davidson Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison. An earlier invitation by an influential Twesme supporter, Alex A. Arnold, had been turned down. See A. A. Arnold to J. O. Davidson, Aug. 14, 1908, *ibid.*; Colonel Oliver Munson to A. A. Arnold, Aug. 19, 1908, *ibid.*

⁶⁶Ekern to LaFollette, Sept. 2, 1908, Ekern Papers; W. L. Houser to Ekern, Sept. 3, 1908, *ibid.*; Ekern to Thomas A. Roycraft, Sept. 4, 1908, *ibid.*; Ekern to W.L. Houser, Sept. 5, 1908, *ibid.*

⁶⁷Translated and reprinted in the local Democratic paper, the Arcadia Leader, Oct. 23, 1908.

⁶⁸Trempealeau Gazette, Sept. 4, 1908; J. T. Qualley to Ekern, Sept. 3, 1908, Ekern Papers.

⁶⁹Ekern to Robert LaFollette, Sept. 2, 1908, Ekern Papers. The list of his principal enemies was modified on later occasions. In a letter to John Strange, Oshkosh, Wisc. the very next day, for example, Ekern said he was defeated by the combination of "outside liquor interests and insurance companies aided by the local stalwarts and governor. . . ." And in a Sept. 4 letter to C. F. Stout, Westboro, Wisc., he added the invidious factor of "nationality prejudice" to the list. He did privately concede, however, that he was part to blame due to neglecting his political organization at home while engaged in state politics. Ekern to Irving Lenroot, Sept. 3, 1908, Ekern Papers.

⁷⁰Ekern to Robert LaFollette, Sept. 2, 1908; V. S. Keffel to Ekern, Sept. 2, 1908, Ekern Papers; Ekern to Walter Houser, Sept. 5, 1908, *ibid.*; Ekern to L. N. Clausen, Sept. 5, 1908, *ibid.*; A. M. Hellekson to Ekern, Sept. 22, 1908, *ibid.*; Robert Cowie to James O. Davidson, Aug. 21, Davidson Papers.

⁷¹Ekern to Irvine Lenroot, Sept. 5, 1908, Ekern Papers; A. T. Rogers to Ekern, Sept. 4, 1908, *ibid.*; Robert M. LaFollette to Ekern, Sept. 16, 1908, *ibid.*

⁷²Blair Press, Oct. 29, 1908; Milwaukee (Wisc.) Sentinel, Nov. 4, 1908; Ekern to Robert LaFollette, Sept. 28, 1908, Ekern Papers.

⁷³Ekern to William Gibson, Oct. 5, 1908, Ekern Papers; Trempealeau Herald, Oct. 9, 23, 1908; Trempealeau Gazette, Oct. 16, 23, 1908; Blair Press, Oct. 29, 1908 and its campaign supplement, Fall, 1908; Independence (Wisc.) News-Wave, Oct. 31, 1908.

⁷⁴Blair Press, Oct. 29, 1908 and its campaign supplement, Fall, 1908; Trempealeau Gazette, Oct. 23, 1908.

⁷⁵To one outsider reporting the events, "the nominal principals in the contest now seem almost to have been overlooked and the contest has become a struggle between Davidson and LaFollette for supremacy in this section of the state." Milwaukee Sentinel, Oct. 29, 1908; Galesville Republican, Nov. 5, 1908.

⁷⁶Blair Press, Oct. 29, 1908.

⁷⁷O. J. Hawkenson to Ekern, Oct. 24, 1908, Ekern Papers.

⁷⁸Independence News-Wave, Oct. 31, 1908; Milwaukee Sentinel, Oct. 29, 1908.

⁷⁹According to one observer, in these circumstances Davidson showed himself to be a better mixer than the Senator in that, while he could not begin to approach the speaking ability of LaFollette, his modest plain spoken manner appealed to the people in a homely way that made them feel at one with him. From Milwaukee Sentinel, undated article in James O. Davidson, Scrapbooks of Newspaper Clippings; E. A. Edmonds to James O. Davidson, Oct. 29, 1908, Davidson Papers.

⁸⁰Milwaukee Sentinel, undated article in James O. Davidson, Scrapbooks of Newspaper Clippings.

⁸¹Ekern to Thomas A. Roycraft, Nov. 2, 1908, Ekern Papers; Ekern to E. S. Turner, Nov. 2, 1908, *ibid*.

⁸²Blair Press, Campaign Supplement, Fall, 1908.

⁸³Blair Press, Oct. 29, 1908; see also Trempealeau Herald, Oct. 30, 1908.

⁸⁴T. J. Saed to Ekern, Oct. 20, 1908, Ekern Papers; Ekern to L. K. Underheim, Oct. 27, 1908, *ibid.*

⁸⁵Milwaukee Sentinel, undated article in James O. Davidson, Scrapbooks of Newspaper Clippings.

⁸⁶This is based on admittedly slim data. Pigeon Township and Preston Township plus Blair Village were heterogeneous in dialect and the more pure dialect townships comprised Albion Township plus Eleva Village, Unity Township plus Strum Village and Ettrick Township. Classifications are drawn from Martin Ulvestad, Norge i Amerika (Minneapolis, 1901), and Einar Haugen, The Norwegian Language in America (2nd ed.; Bloomington, Ind., 1969), II. 610-613. Haugen discusses this assimilative tendency among mixed Norwegian townships on page 349. No similar tendency, however, was found in the combined vote of Norwegian towns throughout the State: the 1906 primary vote for Davidson being 83.1 percent in eight mixed dialect townships and 81.6 percent in twenty-nine more homogeneous or pure dialect townships.

⁸⁷A. N. Freng to Ekern, Aug. 27, 1906, Ekern Papers; Ekern to A. N. Freng, Aug. 28, 1906, *ibid.*; letter of Mr. Linderman to Herman Ekern published in Galesville Republican, July 19, 1906.

CHAPTER V
WORLD WAR I IN THE
NORWEGIAN-AMERICAN MIDWEST

"Once lead this people into war," President Woodrow Wilson sadly predicted to a newspaper publisher on the eve of his war message to Congress, "and they'll forget there ever was such a thing as tolerance." In the brutality that war brings to a people, he feared, "conformity would be the only virtue."¹ Events would bear out his melancholy prophecy. Perhaps nowhere else did abandonment to wartime hysteria become more pronounced than in the Upper Midwestern states.

Progressivism had spent most of its force by the 1916 elections in Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota. Economic and political issues that had animated earlier struggles between stalwarts and progressives no longer provoked widespread public interest. Republican factions had burnt themselves out and people seemed to yearn for a breathing spell. But the war in Europe and prospects for American intervention now intruded, injecting national, intensely emotional, wartime issues into politics that cut across and shattered political divisions engendered by progressive

reform. America's ultimate entry into the war in 1917 exacerbated the injection of patriotism into politics, imposing special strains in Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin. Intent on assuring that their respective states would contribute their full share to the war effort, some state and local leaders proved willing to advocate extreme measures. These they believed were needed to surmount what they saw as lingering neutralist sentiment and the unreliable loyalty of many among their disproportionately large foreign-born populations, the most sizable of which was the German-speaking minority. Consequently, while the declaration of war brought an immediate public response, so too did the resulting measures bring a severe tightening of the public mood.

The drive to unify public sentiment increasingly took two pernicious forms. Leaders began to insist repeatedly that "radicalness" of any kind promoted political divisions and therefore must be set aside for the war and, secondly, many encouraged popular prejudices by holding that things smacking of "foreignism" ought to be eliminated. Where people in authority let matters drift or yielded to hysterical public clamor for stern action, their failure to oppose lawlessness firmly allowed local hatreds and passions to get out of hand. Mob spirit gripped many localities--would-be patriots used unofficial witch-hunts

and terrorism to supplement whatever official crusade others engaged in to justify the war and ferret out disloyalty. German-Americans, of course, faced the worst of this, but Norwegian-Americans, as we shall see, suffered their share of indignities along with other foreign groups.

In particular, the "anti-radical" campaign in Minnesota to halt the Nonpartisan League's organizing efforts and Governor Harding's "antiforeign-language" proclamation in Iowa imposed severe political choices on Norwegian settlements. These two wartime measures would soon cause them to scatter their votes among Democratic, Republican and third-party candidates.

I

The neutrality and preparedness struggles had already begun to agitate national politics when yet another large scale agrarian movement took hold of people's interest on the Dakota prairies. Feeling rebuffed by the legislature's failure to act against grain marketing practices, wheat farmers proved ripe for organization. Under the leadership of Arthur C. Townley, the Farmers' Nonpartisan Political League appeared with a socialistic program that called for state ownership and operation of grain elevators, stock yards,

and mills, and state inspection of grain and dockage. In short order, they had ignited a farmer's revolt that in the 1916 elections captured control of North Dakota's government. The movement's stunning success, its radical program and its vigorous leadership infused with socialists, alarmed the interests that League leaders denounced as the same old gang controlling North Dakota as though it were a subsidiary of Minneapolis and St. Paul milling, banking and railroad concerns. But soon Republican party alarm turned to fear as the League's organizers swept on into neighboring states in early 1917, scouting the countryside in Model-T Fords to recruit thousands of new members. Changing its name to the National Nonpartisan League, in January, 1918 it established new headquarters in St. Paul.²

Minnesotans shared the nation's prevailing war hysteria and suspicion of foreign groups, but the onrush of the Nonpartisan League movement diverted the administration of Governor Joseph A. A. Burnquist from specific actions to Americanize the foreign-born. Instead, the powerful momentum of the developing movement so frightened Republican leaders that, responding largely through the Minnesota Commission for Public Safety--a temporary board organized to see the state through the war--they wielded

arbitrary policies and charges of disloyalty to quash the movement's force.

"This is no time," declared Governor Burnquist, "to divide our people into factions through the stirring up of untimely issues in contests for public offices."³ The League soon found itself caught fast--enmeshed in issues spawned by the emotions of war.⁴ By exaggerating the socialists' ideological coolness to war and by decrying any political dissension that diverts public attention from winning the war, opponents easily attached the stigma of "disloyalty" to the Nonpartisan League. Pressures reached a climax during the weeks preceding the 1918 Republican primary election, when the first major contest occurred between a League endorsed candidate, Charles Lindbergh, and Governor Burnquist.

Prewar neutrality sentiment, lack of enthusiasm about preparedness, and the division of voices toward the European belligerents had convinced many conservative Minnesotans that the air was thick with pacifism, seditious intrigue and widespread un-Americanism. Two complicating conditions in this state particularly alarmed conservative Republican leaders. Fully 70 percent of Minnesota's people in 1910 were either of foreign birth or the son or daughter of someone who was.⁵ Germans, Swedes and Norwegians predominated and super-patriots suspected them

all. Minnesotans knew of traditional Swedish distrust of Russia and of Swedish respect for things German that had evoked a measure of sympathy for Germany's cause. Raised eyebrows about neutralist minded Norwegians had been partly offset by their tendency to sympathize with the Allies, but when many Norwegian-Americans began joining the farmers' Nonpartisan League, suspicions heightened of their pacifistic radicalism.⁶

Rather than form a third party, the Nonpartisan League aimed to dominate the majority party by using the party's own primary election to elect candidates sympathetic to its cause. To accomplish their goals, League Leaders continually stressed tight organization as necessary to both expand their membership and concentrate their voting strength at election time. Arthur Townley, a master of high pressure salesmanship who had apparently concluded reform could not be sold unless it was hustled, steadily recruited and carefully trained a body of organizers who, effectively motorized, began in 1917 to fan out across western Minnesota. The sixteen dollar membership fees soon came rolling in.⁷

Making Minnesota the keystone of its efforts, through the summer months of 1917 organizing activities of the League proceeded relatively unopposed. But by the time its leaders commenced a projected series of fall farmer

meetings, opposition had hardened. With many feeling Republican dominance to be threatened and, encouraged by the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety, patriotic opinion leaders effectively turned sentiment against the League. Twin City newspapers initiated the opposition, promoting the argument that politics ought to cease in the interests of wartime unity, especially political activities that might increase class antagonisms or in any way dampen public support for the war. Endless repetition of this effective argument by many country weekly newspapers soon condemned nearly every proposed League meeting to accusations of disloyalty. Nineteen Minnesota counties by March 1918 had adopted measures barring all meetings of the League.⁸

Wartime hysteria reached its peak during the bitterly contested campaign leading to Minnesota's primary election of June 17, 1918--the first major test of League strength. At their state convention in St. Paul on March 17, League delegates endorsed the candidacy of former congressman Charles A. Lindbergh--father of the future famous aviator--against Governor Burnquist. But though a well-known Republican politician of Swedish extraction, Lindbergh's endorsement during the war constituted a serious mistake by the League. His anti-war stance before America's entry in the conflict made him especially vulnerable to charges

of pro-Germanism and disloyalty. In fact, hardly did Lindbergh receive his endorsement before Twin Cities newspapers immediately wrenched passages and phrases from his recently published Why Is Your Country At War (1917), printing and reprinting them with devastating effect.⁹ Governor Burnquist had been invited to give a welcoming address to the convention, but instead grasped the occasion to send a scathing refusal based on the League's alleged disloyalty. Accusing the League of closely aligning itself with pro-German, I.W.W. and Red Socialist elements, the Governor vowed that from that point on Minnesota would have only two parties, "one composed of the loyalists and the other of the disloyalists."¹⁰

The loyalty issue dominated the ensuing campaign, pushing debate on the League's agrarian reform program out of sight. When the ballots were counted, it could be seen that Minnesota's Norwegian-Americans, as during the earlier Populist era, had made a major contribution toward that end.

II

This is not to say that most Norwegian-Americans sympathized with the League or voted for its candidates. The response of Norwegian settlements in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa resembled that of Populist times, in

that the movement made little headway outside the western counties of Minnesota. Hence, the Nonpartisan League movement made no impact whatever on Norwegian settlements of Iowa or Wisconsin.¹¹ Even within Minnesota, Norwegian farm settlements outside the western grain region avoided the movement. In the southeastern dairy region, for instance, not only did Fillmore County's voters cast only 25 percent of their ballots for the League's candidate, league percentages failed to equal even that in seven of nine predominantly Norwegian precincts located there. This pattern held throughout diversified crop and dairy sections of the state.

On the surface, therefore, the latest agrarian outburst affected Norwegian settlements much as that of two decades before, although in Minnesota, as Table 7 reveals, the locus of Norwegian-American farmer discontent had shifted southward since the 1890's to the west-central region. "This wholly unsound movement," remarked Ole Sageng of Otter Tail County, had carried away "a very large part of our really substantial and ordinarily cautious Scandinavian farmers," but actually League organizers had found greater success in scouring the Norwegian townships of Kandiyohi and Swift counties than in Otter Tail.¹²

Table 7
Agrarian Supported Candidates' Share
of the Vote for Governor from
Three Regions of Minnesota^a

Region	1890-1896 Percent	1918-1924 Percent
Southeastern counties	16.9	28.3
West Central counties	45.6	71.0
Northwestern counties	66.9	56.6

^aAgrarian candidates, 1890-1896 included the nominee of the Farmers' Alliance party, Peoples' Party, and Democratic/Populist Fusion party, while all candidates during the period 1918-1924 ran on the Farmer-Labor ticket.

A second important change had also taken place: town-country antagonisms among Norwegian settlements showed themselves by the early 1920's to be far deeper than they had been in the 1890's (Table 8). It is no accident that in Rushford City (Fillmore County), where Norwegian-Americans comprised nearly two-thirds of the voting age males in 1905, Charles Lindbergh won a lower percentage of the votes cast than in any of the several other surrounding Norwegian farm precincts of the county. The same differences marked western counties. In small town Norwegian-American precincts of Polk County, for example, votes for Lindbergh in the primary sagged 20 percentage points beneath their farm counterparts. Such antagonisms in Minnesota had invariably accompanied every farmer movement, but this time two circumstances especially widened the gulf. One was the heightened mood of farmer anger that acts of small town patriots had fostered during the war. The other drew from efforts of Nonpartisan League organizers and their opponents to capitalize on urban-rural hostility.

By its very nature, the 1918 "loyalty" campaign against the Nonpartisan League rang with overtones of bitterness between Main Street and the countryside. The specters of radicalism, class division, socialism, disloyalty and Americanism with its implied anti-foreignism

Table 8

Agrarian Candidates' Share of the Vote for
Governor from Norwegian Settlements of
Minnesota, Classified by Percent People
Living in Incorporated Towns^a

Region	1890-1896 Percent	1918-1924 Percent
Low Urban (16.7% or less)	47.2	56.1
Moderate Urban (16.8%-34.9%)	45.4	44.6
High Urban (35% or more)	38.1	34.0

^aAgrarian candidates, 1890-1896, included the nominee of the Farmers' Alliance party, Peoples' Party, and Democratic/Populist Fusion party, while all candidates during the period 1918-1924 ran on the Farmer-Labor ticket in general elections. Population percentages for incorporated towns and villages are drawn from the Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910; Vol. I: Population (Washington, 1913).

had been raised by League opponents and nearly all such expressions emanated from city and small town spokesmen. Consequently mutual respect broke down; the farmer turned defensive and antagonistic toward townsmen. When prominent citizens from several Swift County towns met in a mass meeting at Benson to demand the suppression of "seditious and unpatriotic public meetings" by Nonpartisan League speakers, farmers from heavily Norwegian townships quickly reacted. "We claim we are just as loyal and doing as much to win this war as citizens of our cities and villages," declared a caucus of Camp Lake farmers.¹³ Similarly Kerkhoven farmers resented this act by townsmen to "accuse and convict law-abiding farmers of Swift County of being traitors and harboring sedition without a hearing."¹⁴

"Look out for Appleton," warned another Swift County farmer whose automobile had sported a banner favoring the League's candidate for governor. "When some of us farmers asked . . . [the town marshal] to protect our property, he offered his star to a bystander and asked to see if he could do it, and boys walked right up in front of the Marshall and tore my Lindbergh banner off." Another prominent "good citizen" "told me I ought to be ashamed to have a sign like Lindbergh's on my car as I have a boy in the army." But "the likes of the 'good citizen' could not make me ashamed, for I saw him wash the yellow paint off of his building a short time ago."¹⁵

Hoping to turn this to their advantage, League newspapers and their friends breathed with feeling against the towns, perpetuating Townley's call for farmers to take control away from "the smooth-tongued, bay-windowed fellows that looked well, talked well, lived well, lied well."¹⁶ When a Swift County farmer visiting town found his car painted yellow "in plain view of the business men of the village, who offered to give the name of the painter for a reward of \$100," an editor sympathetic to the League asked if "the sore heads . . . think for a moment that any self-respecting farmer will take the abuse accorded to him, and then come back and kiss the hand that hit him?"¹⁷

Simultaneously, the League's tactics offered opportunities to opponents trying to mobilize the small town vote. During Ole Sageng's anti-League bid for re-election to the state senate from Otter Tail County, he published an open letter to voters of Fergus Falls on the day before the election. The Nonpartisan League's demand to exempt farm improvements from taxation, he said, meant that the city's business and laboring men would have to pay higher taxes. When this had been pointed out to the League organizer who "spent a day of his time" trying to "organize" him, the answer Sageng said he got from the "sleek political profiteer" was "'Let the other fellow look out for himself.'"¹⁸

Sageng's Norwegian-American League opponent later summarized the urban character of the opposition and the collapse of their program in charges of disloyalty:

All the big city papers were against them; all the small daily papers in the smaller cities were against them, and at least nine out of every ten of the rural weeklies were fighting them.

The cry that this was no time to agitate and discuss problems influenced thousands of voters and the charges of disloyalty, hurled with such fierceness and persistency, frightened thousands more from the support of the League candidates.¹⁹

The accusations provoking this melancholy summation continued to hang over the League and radical farm politics of the twenties--evoking bitterness that kept the breach wide between Norwegian rural and small town settlements. It helped guarantee that Norwegian settlements in the western counties would vote disproportionately in favor of agrarian candidates for governor through 1924. Their average 1918-1924 agrarian vote exceeded by 9 percentage points that of the western counties in which they were located.

Nevertheless, votes from Norwegian farm settlements in western Minnesota also revealed mixed feelings. Some localities exhibited markedly weaker support for the League than did others in the June primary. Lindbergh won over three-fourths of the vote cast by Norwegian farm precincts of Kandiyohi County, while getting barely one-half of the vote from those of Otter Tail County.

III

Some of these differences between Kandiyohi and Otter Tail counties are worth recounting in detail in order to show how the force of local leadership and events spun different results from similar League efforts. Even though the Nonpartisan League forcefully voiced its agricultural grievances through publications and organizers, local success depended on the absence of effective arguments from League opponents whom farmers respected. In some communities this challenge was more effectively mounted than in others.

Nonpartisan League organizers met an enthusiastic response from the farmers of Kandiyohi County. Over eleven hundred enrolled members had by late summer of 1917 made Kandiyohi the second strongest League county in the State.²⁰ Although many opposed the League there, as later incidents demonstrated, no major party politicians felt willing openly to challenge the farmers' organization. In addition, Victor E. Lawson, who edited the county's largest newspaper, the Willmar Tribune, threw his support behind the reform program of the Nonpartisan League. Even the county sheriff raised little complaint. After traveling first to neighboring Meeker County in early October 1917 to preview a speech by Arthur Townley, he found nothing objectionable enough to warrant stopping the League's

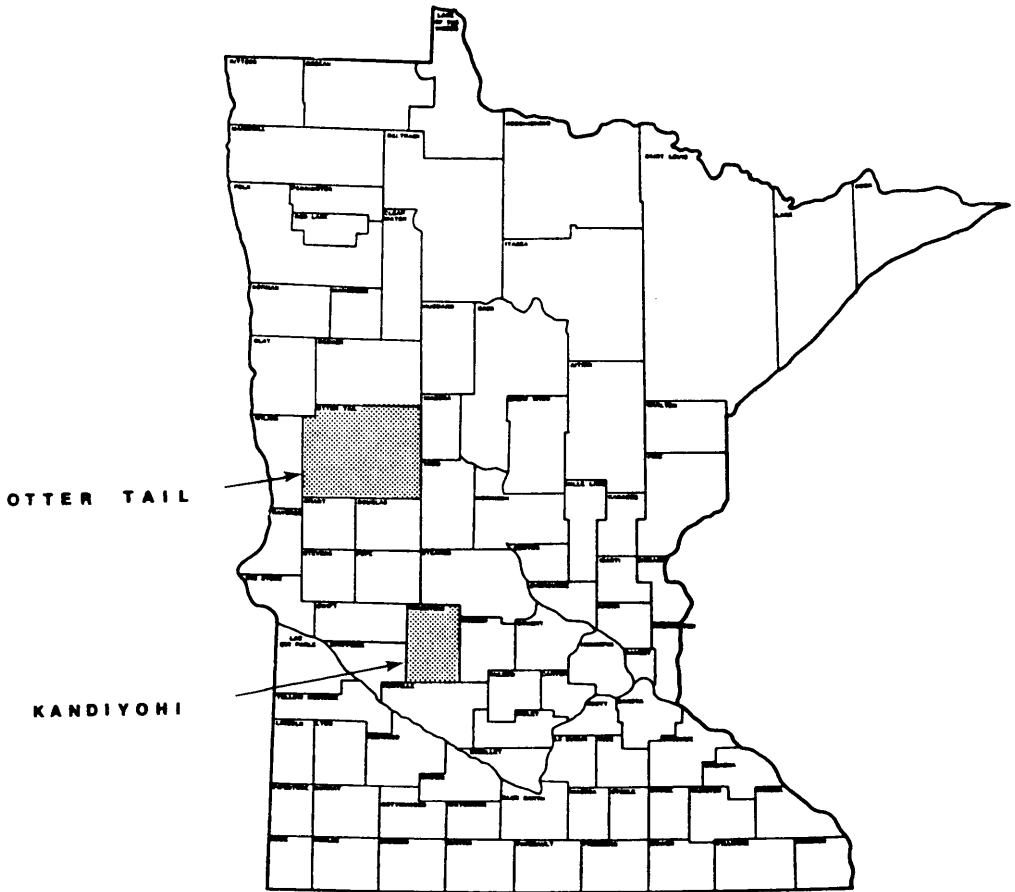


Figure 19. Kandiyohi and Otter Tail counties in Minnesota.

leader from speaking before a similar meeting at Willmar the following week.²¹ Townley made his speech at the Willmar Opera House, despite what the Willmar Tribune's editor called "repeated efforts . . . , especially in the Minneapolis papers, to impugn the patriotism of Mr. Townley."²²

Holding such a meeting in Otter Tail County, however, was entirely another matter. A few days after the Willmar speech, Townley's schedule called for him to appear before a farmers' meeting at the Lyceum Theater in Fergus Falls, but certain parties there moved to block its occurrence. Most remarkably, Louis Keane, secretary of the Otter Tail County Public Safety Commission, had sent a threatening letter to the president of the Nonpartisan League. It read as follows:

Information has reached this office to the effect that you contemplate speaking here in this county on Octo. 20.

I am instructed to notify you that this Association will not tolerate any kind of talk here except that which honors our flag and the country for which it stands.

So you will construe this notice as an invitation not to come.

If after the receipt of this notice you persist in trying to talk here we have made arrangements with our Mayor who has given orders to the police force not to interfere if small boys (and others) use ancient eggs and other missiles where with to punctuate your discourse.²³

Local League defenders immediately protested this threat. Martin W. Odland, a Norwegian-American editor of the

Fergus Falls Free Press and representative in the state legislature, declared that the act called into serious question the city's reputation as a "respectable, law-abiding community."²⁴ Although Mayor Ericksson denied to Odland that "he would sanction any such disgraceful lawlessness," he nevertheless banned any meeting at which Townley would be speaker.²⁵ The people of the city, said the mayor, "do not invite bankrupt and meddlesome agitators of any kind to come into their midst for the purpose of breeding and disseminating without cause, dissension and disloyalty, especially during the stress of war."²⁶ Consequently, the League arranged to have former congressmen Charles Lindbergh and James Manahan appear in his place. At the October 20 meeting, a packed-to-capacity audience overwhelmingly passed a resolution calling upon Governor Burnquist to remove the mayor from office.²⁷

Despite large numbers of local Nonpartisan League members and Martin Odland's presence as a vigorous spokesman for their interests in Otter Tail County, opponents of the League organized and expressed themselves far more openly than in Kandiyohi County. First of all, unlike in Kandiyohi County, the leading newspaper vocally opposed the Nonpartisan League. Owned by Elmer Adams, a man wise in the ways of pressing a political advantage, the Fergus Falls Journal remained staunchly Republican and did not

shy from attacking the League. Adams, also the president of the city's First National Bank, had served four terms as a state representative, and now stood once again as the party's candidate.²⁸ Even more important for League prospects among Norwegian-American farmers, certain of their prominent local politicians openly turned against the Nonpartisan League. In particular, the popular state legislator, Senator Ole Sageng, refused pleas by the League to lead their effort there.²⁹ His credentials could not easily be assailed. A farmer near Dalton in the Norwegian township of Tumuli, Sageng had back in 1900 won office first as a Populist and after 1906 as an independent, serving one term in the house and three terms in the senate.³⁰ Even when in 1918 Martin Odland became the League's candidate for the senate against Sageng, Odland praised his opponent as a "forceful speaker, a skilled parliamentarian, and one of the best known men in the senate," before noting the "keen disappointment to his farmer friends that, owing to the course he has recently pursued, his endorsement for reelection by the organized [League] farmers was out of the question."³¹ In addition to Ole Sageng, O. P. B. Jacobson of the State Railroad and Warehouse Commission came out for Governor Burnquist's reelection against Lindbergh. He owned, although no longer edited, the local Norwegian language newspaper, the

Ugeblad.³² Schooled in the rough and tumble politics of Populist times and unintimidated by the force of agrarian rhetoric, Adams, Sageng and Jacobson conspired to bring about the League's defeat.

Still, there were limits on the influence that county leadership could exert. All had to cope with the timing of events at state and local levels, which gave both color and intensity to voters' impressions in Norwegian settlements.

Kandiyohi County, for example, had been one of the best organized in the state. For this reason Lindbergh chose to open his campaign there on April 25 for the Republican nomination for governor. The gathering crowd at the courthouse in Willmar became so immense that it had to move to the city fairgrounds so that all could hear.³³ For some weeks thereafter, statewide matters, such as Arthur Townley's indictment by Martin County authorities for sedition, dominated local discussion. But then, in the closing days of the primary contest, two local events took place that intensified farmer feeling.

The first occurred a few hours after a speech by Governor Burnquist in Willmar. One and a half weeks before the primary election, several Nonpartisan League members from about the county met to plan a county parade by automobile on Friday of the following week.³⁴ But on

Wednesday of that week another event intervened when Governor Burnquist appeared to make his speech. All went well during the afternoon. A large parade preceded the governor's address, after which the governor spoke, insisting that since "this is no time to divide our people into factions" by making political speeches, he would confine his remarks to a stirring plea for 100 percent loyalty.³⁵ Later that evening, however, things turned sour. Perhaps carried away by the emotional appeal of the governor's speech, certain of the town's citizens smeared yellow floor paint on the front of the Willmar Tribune's printing office and slipped a note under the door accusing editor Lawson of pro-Germanism and of being a disloyal Swede. In his next issue, Victor Lawson highlighted the emotional impact of the event when he called it a "cowardly and contemptible attempt" to besmirch his loyalty, an attack that had been quickly "denounced by the best element of the City of Willmar." But then, tying it to the farmers movement, he explained that:

Instinctively also the country people felt that the editor was being punished for having been fair to their movement and the resentment shown was intense. Intended as a slam that would injure the editor, and destroy the influence of the paper, the outrage proved a blessing in disguise, for it aroused the people and resulted in a spontaneous rally of popular support such as we doubt has ever before been received by a local newspaper in Minnesota.

As for our stand of fairness towards the farmers and the organization they have made for the avowed purpose of bettering economic conditions in this country, we have no apologies to make. We know that

our action is displeasing to politicians who feel that they are losing their grip on the political situation, but we cannot for that reason change our attitude that we believe right, nor can we countenance the wrongful use of patriotic activities for the furtherance of partisan advantages. We have tried our very best to avoid needless friction between town and country people, and believe that this is a time when public men should remain cool and use tact in dealing with public questions during the heat of political campaigns.³⁶

To demonstrate their protest and commitment to the League, a farmers' parade began on Friday morning from Svea to Raymond and then continued on to Willmar and other towns of the county. As the parade was joined by ever more cars on the way, editor Victor Lawson remarked: "The impression made on the spectators as mile after mile of automobiles passed loaded with quiet but determined country people, and decorated with flags and banners cannot be described. It was soul gripping." By the time the procession reached Willmar, over three hundred cars were in a line. Owing to reported threats of violence, the cars passed through without stopping. Even so, Lawson reported that "a number of people disgraced themselves by pulling off banners and hurling jibes at the paraders." Before its end, the parade had grown to nearly seven hundred cars stretching for several miles. The farmers, not unmindful of what had been done to editor Lawson's office the other night, paused on their way home that evening and asked Lawson to come down to his office where

he "found a crowd of tired but happy paraders who proceeded to unload lists of subscriptions pledged to the Willmar Tribune taken on the trip."³⁷

Nothing of this dramatic nature occurred in Otter Tail County during the primary campaign. Except for a well attended Lindbergh campaign speech at Fergus Falls the first week of May, which drew people from a considerable distance, the League appeared less active in the county.³⁸ Martin Odland, the League's candidate against Sageng, editorialized for the League in his paper. But his commentary was largely defensive--responding to attacks from others.

Here, the League's opponents took the initiative and continued to hold it. Decades of experience as a leader of political opinion in the region helped Elmer Adams of the Fergus Falls Journal probe every weak point that might undermine or discredit the League. Arguing less in the fashion of a maddened bitter-ender than of a shrewd demagogue, he subjected the League to attack over the weeks with trip-hammer regularity. The Journal pounded on three themes leading up to the primary election. During the initial months of 1918, editorials argued that Townley, not farmers, ran the League and sent outsiders into the county to hoodwink each farmer out of sixteen dollars.³⁹ After the local League conventions in mid-March, the theme

switched for a time to sniping at the League's endorsement of non-farmer candidates such as Martin Odland to the State Legislature.⁴⁰ In the last six weeks before the primary, however, editorial comment increasingly aimed at associating the League with disloyalty and pro-Germanism. How could loyal farmers continue to stay with the League, asked typical editorials, when the League is supported by all the disloyal? Other commentary suggested that Lindbergh votes came from those who favored a weakened prosecution of the war by the government.⁴¹

Meanwhile, Senator Ole Sageng began making the rounds of Norwegian settlements speaking for Governor Burnquist. He often traveled with O. P. B. Jacobson. The addresses became especially frequent during the final two weeks of the primary campaign--taking Sageng to nearly every heavily Norwegian township: Leaf Mountain, Folden, Norwegian Grove, Trondhjem, Oscar and Aastad. A report in the Journal expressed confidence that, although Leaf Mountain and Folden townships "are probably the strongest of all the townships in Otter Tail for Townleyism, the senator is of the opinion that Townleyism has past its peak and that many people who favored the League when it was organized are beginning to see it in a different light."⁴² Being an ardent prohibitionist himself, as were many Norwegians, Sageng stressed that Governor Burnquist had always backed

legislation asked by the county, especially county option and statewide prohibition. Standing before suspicious farmers, the angular, thin featured Sageng eloquently lauded efforts of the controversial Minnesota Commission of Public Safety to crack down on the liquor traffic. As for the Nonpartisan League, "there are some in every township," he declared, "who have gone so crazy over the proposition that they are disgusting others so that they are quietly quitting, even though forced to wear the buttons 'We'll Stick.'"⁴³ And telling the audience that "the pro-German element and the I.W.W. element in Minnesota is against Governor Burnquist," Sageng asked if farmers in the audience "intended to line up with those elements against Governor Burnquist."⁴⁴

Although convincing to some, others resented his message. At Leaf Mountain, for example, people came away with a wholly different view of the matter. One farmer wrote that "to say a majority of the audience were disgusted is putting it mildly."

We thought Ole knew better than to come out among intelligent people and tell them that any vote cast for Lindbergh is a pro-German vote.

I venture to say that Leaf Mountain will cast a majority vote for all League candidates, and they are not pro-Germans either.

People have come to the conclusion that they were given a set of brains of their own to use and have decided that they do not need a bell cow in the form of a slick man like Ole to tell them how to vote. This matter of a man wrapping the American

flag around him and calling everybody else disloyal is so disgusting that any self respecting man will pay no attention to such gush of hot air.⁴⁵

The farmer proved to be right about Leaf Mountain's vote. When the ballots were counted, results showed that nine out of ten voters in the township had supported Lindbergh. In Folden Township 80 percent of the voters stood by Lindbergh and 70 percent went for him in two heavily Norwegian townships. But elsewhere the efforts of Sageng and others had clearly paid off. In Aastad, Oscar, Nidaros, Sverdrup, Dane Prairie and in Sageng's own township of Tumuli, voters cast majorities for Governor Burnquist. Meanwhile, in the townships of Kandiyohi County, Charles Lindbergh drew three-fourths or more of the votes cast in every Norwegian settlement.

Statewide, however, Lindbergh had been defeated by a vote of 199,325 to 150,626. The Governor of Minnesota and his war agency, the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety, had dealt the Nonpartisan League a blow. But difficult times soon beset the Republican party as it tried with mixed success to stem the League's postwar successor, the Farmer-Labor party. Without wartime fears to capitalize on, Burnquist and his successors found it more difficult to further their political interests by sowing seeds of distrust, dissension and hatred. Their wartime measures to maintain power had succeeded, but not

without cost: thousands of Norwegian farmers had been alienated from the Republican party--angered more than intimidated by aspersions on their loyalty.

IV

In Iowa, the League claimed no more than 15,000 members.⁴⁶ This partly owed itself to the unrelenting antagonism of the Greater Iowa Association and its active distribution of an overwhelming amount of anti-League literature. Also, the League threw few resources into the Iowa fight, concentrating instead on trying to organize Minnesota. The League established no official newspaper in Iowa, and although James Pierce, the publisher of the politically powerful Iowa Homestead, took up their cause, organizing efforts never got off the ground.⁴⁷ Still, another issue appeared in Iowa, one spawned by the overheated war atmosphere. It highly disturbed Norwegian-American voters, among others, and directly threatened prospects for Governor Harding's wartime administration.

William Lloyd Harding, a politician of great skill, occupied center stage of Iowa politics during the second decade of the twentieth century. Guided by the influential George D. Perkins, editor of the Sioux City Journal, and equipped with a likable personality and moderate

Republican record, Harding had secured the lieutenant governorship in 1912. Gifted as an off-the-cuff orator, the ambitious Sioux City politician had by 1916 brought the exhausted faction ridden party under his leadership. And in the general election of that year, he gained an overwhelming victory over his Democratic opponent after a hard fought campaign. But then, Harding as governor began to stumble and his administration floundered. George Perkin's death in 1914 had left Harding drifting politically rudderless and, without his strong, steady hand, legislative inaction took its toll and exploitation by friends brought scandal to his administration. But his fortunes improved with the coming of war. Iowans immediately and enthusiastically rallied behind their government and Harding quickly capitalized on his oratorical skills to marshal public support for the war effort.⁴⁸

Iowa's prospects looked especially bright in the spring of 1918. Abnormal wartime demand for the state's grain, livestock and livestock products had brought welcome prosperity to the farm and brisk trade to the main streets of nearby towns and cities. Traveling through the city of Des Moines, the governor could see nearly everywhere signs of commercial expansion: construction of Hotel Fort Des Moines was well underway, the new Court Avenue bridge was about ready for dedication, and a variety of retail

and apartment buildings were nearing completion. As for the war effort, public opinion had swung strongly behind the war policies of Governor Harding and his State Council of Defense. The vigor with which he mobilized Iowa's manpower, agricultural and industrial resources and his sometimes overzealous but effective patriotic speeches in support of new policies and fund drives had stilled all but an occasional critic of his administration. Harding's renomination now seemed assured.

Still, a few advisors and Harding himself fretted about public mobilization. Some remained especially perturbed about purported lukewarmness toward the war among foreign elements. In particular, Lafayette Young, editor of the Des Moines Capital and chairman of the powerful State Council of Defense, agitated the issue. Becoming nearly obsessed with disloyalty, he urged policies to aggressively eradicate roadblocks to "Americanism" posed by foreign groups. In the first war loan drive, Iowa had fallen over 28 million dollars short of its assigned quota, and the embarrassed Council blamed the failure partly on foreign groups not appreciating the meaning of the campaign. The authorities in subsequent Liberty Loan drives abandoned thrift or investment features of the bonds and traded almost exclusively on patriotism. They also shifted the sales approach, as one contemporary writer put

it, from "requests for purely volunteer subscriptions to what amounted to forced levies for specific amounts."⁴⁹ But beyond concerns about foreign-born disinterest in loan drives, leaders saw a broader problem to be the language barrier between foreign-born and English speaking Iowans. "Americanizers" believed it accounted for increasing instances of bitter suspicion and misunderstanding around the state that occasionally flared into violence.

Lafayette Young advocated the necessity for one language in a series of editorials in his newspaper, the Des Moines Capital, beginning in August 1917.⁵⁰ One month later Governor Harding officially suggested a specific Americanization campaign aimed at awakening by persuasion the "latent" loyalty of foreign elements. But Lafe Young, not at all quiet about his views, pressed on--convinced that only a more aggressive approach by the governor would do. Events helped. Increasing instances of mob violence, property damage and "kangaroo court" convictions had accompanied the recent third Liberty Loan drive. In addition public protests accumulated against the use of German language on the telephone lines.⁵¹ These cases, interpreted by Lafayette Young and others as proof that foreign language use had annoyed and provoked people, strengthened their arguments. The efforts finally brought results.

on May 23, Governor Harding issued a Language Proclamation compelling an almost immediate change to English.⁵²

This most controversial proclamation of his wartime administration required that English be the sole medium of instruction in the schools, and that citizens should not converse in anything but English in public places, on trains, over the telephone and in church services for the duration of the war.⁵³ The balance of Harding's proclamation contained his apologia, in which he pointed out that controversy over the use of foreign languages had made the rules necessary to return peace and harmony to the people. Although admittedly "inconvenient to some," he urged that the "rules be adhered to by all" so that "united as one people with one purpose and one language, we fight shoulder to shoulder for the good of mankind."

Neither Norwegians nor other Scandinavians were the first to react. The Bohemian-Americans of Cedar Rapids, supported by the editor of the Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette, instead took the lead. Residents sent dozens of telegrams and the paper printed several editorials. But after fuming for a week, the editor of the Gazette stopped discussing the issue, apparently satisfied by Harding's clarifying letter to Bohemian-born Iowans to the effect that the edict had been aimed not directly at foreign language use, but at German propaganda being spread through them.⁵⁴

This shift in interpretation--the first of many to follow--satisfied some. But where the Evening Gazette and the Bohemians stimulated discussion of the issue, the editor of the Des Moines Register and Iowa's Danish-born population mounted a major campaign against Harding's proclamation.

After hesitating until the first week of June, the Des Moines Register editor from that point on almost by himself kept the controversy alive by relentless public airing of grievances against the language proclamation. He did this partly through the paper's own staff editorials, but primarily by opening its columns to all public comment and by reprinting accounts from other papers. While righteous indignation may have impelled the Register to act, a generous share of long-standing, bitter opposition to Governor Harding and his policies cannot be discounted.⁵⁵ Be that as it may, the editorial stance taken by the largest of the state's daily papers was a factor to be reckoned with, even though the preponderance of public opinion may well have supported Harding's proclamation.⁵⁶

Figure 20 indicates that two phases marked the Register's handling of the language question. The first followed Harding's proclamation itself, which prompted a good deal of reaction from Danish areas of the state.

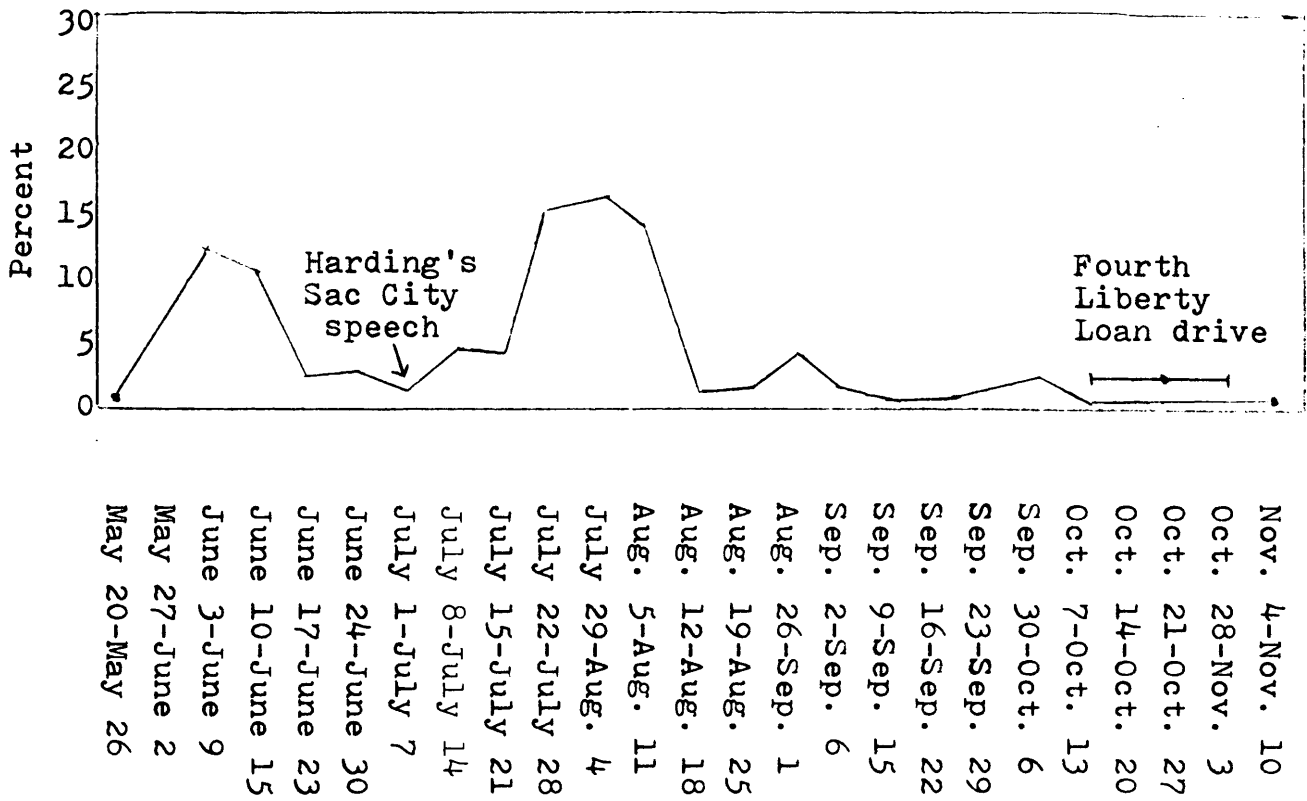


Figure 20. Weekly Percent of Total Column Space Devoted to the Foreign Language issue from May 23 to November 10, 1918.

The second followed Governor Harding's Fourth of July speech at Sac City where, perhaps carried away by the patriotic zeal of his own extemporaneous remarks, the governor offered disparaging remarks about the Danes.⁵⁷

While Norwegian related comment added up to only 3 percent of the column space devoted by the Register to the language issue, Danish views consumed fully 25 percent. The Register's own staff editorials on the controversy absorbed only 17 percent of the total.⁵⁸

It would be a mistake, however, to think that because the Danes protested more visibly, Norwegians had been any the less hurt and angered by the language order. A review of voting results indicates that Governor Harding's vote in 1918 dropped in both Norwegian and Danish settlements by about 39 percentage points from average past levels of support for Republican candidates.⁵⁹ Quite evidently, Danish-born Iowans gave off sparks; less visible fireworks smoldered elsewhere.

Most distressing to Norwegian-Americans, the language order encroached upon their religion. It stunned them that the governor's edict had forbidden foreign language use in religious gatherings, except among families in their own homes. To this the editor of the Story City Norwegian-language paper, the Visergutten, responded that "It practically drives American loyal citizens out of the

church buildings they themselves have built, sanctioned under the law, for their religious services." Saddened by the implications, the editor lamented the loss to foreign-born housewives too busy "to take up the study of languages." What also, he asked, of the mothers with sons fighting overseas, for whom devotional services have "been her best consolation?"⁶⁰

Editors of most local English language papers avoided the issue, partly because they agreed that politics ought to be adjourned for the war and partly because they recognized, as one paper put it, that the governor's proclamation "unquestionably conforms to popular prejudices in Iowa against foreignism of all kinds."⁶¹ In counties where many Norwegians lived, editors either pretended that the language edict did not exist, as in the case of the Northwood Worth County Index (the county's major paper), or they simply fell silent after making a comment or two regretting its issuance. Not more than a half dozen items relating to the controversy appeared in any newspaper of a heavily Norwegian county from the time when the proclamation was issued to the day of the general election in November, 1918. And, of these, hardly an item appeared after August.⁶²

Still, what did appear often proves revealing. Just after Harding announced his proclamation, the editor of the

Forest City Summit printed on his front page a letter from Pastor William Jorgenson of the local Norwegian-Danish Methodist church. Harding's was a "harsh" proclamation, Jorgenson asserted, one based on the "absurd" notion that while the United States Constitution guaranteed religious liberty, state governments could proscribe its form of practice. "I, for one," he added,

am unable to express my thoughts in English as freely as I can in my mother tongue. Instead of helping me in assisting our government, this proclamation is hampering me in my work as a Scandinavian pastor among the Scandinavian people, inasmuch as I can much better bring home to my people the necessity of buying Liberty Bonds and War Savings Stamps, give to the Red Cross, Y.M.C.A., etc., when I use the Scandinavian language instead of the English.⁶³

Eight of ten men in the armed forces from his one-hundred-member congregation had been volunteers, he said, and all members had contributed their fair shares to war campaign drives. "It is impossible for us to understand why" Harding should have issued a proclamation "against the use of our language in our own church." Ending on what seemed a defiant note, he declared that of the seventy-eight members who attended the previous Sunday's service all but two had "expressed themselves in favor of continuing our church services in the Norwegian-Danish language."⁶⁴

Surprisingly, however, some local newspapers not only failed to defend the interests of their many Norwegian constituents, but also failed to respect them. In the

heavily Norwegian town of Decorah, for example, two out of three newspapers actually supported the governor's proclamation while the third distinguished itself by a single instance of token resistance.

In the columns of the city's largest newspaper, the Decorah Public Opinion, several favorable editorials appeared about a month after the governor issued his proclamation. Mincing few words, the Republican editor found the language edict to have "the approval and endorsement of every citizen of the State who has reached the point where he is ready to submerge his own dinky personal views and opinions in the one great and absorbing question that is up to the American people to settle."⁶⁵ Likening the governor's situation to that of a battlefield commander who in time of war must be autocratic, the editor held that the good soldier "obeys orders without quibbling or calling a halt to discuss the constitutionality of the order." Inconvenience there will be, he said, but war makes that necessary, and anyone at home who does not expect some inconvenience "is either despicably selfish or lamentably ignorant."⁶⁶

The editor of the second Republican paper, the Decorah Republican, voiced similar opinions. Only in the June 6 issue did he address the question. It would have been wiser, he suggested, had Governor Harding adopted the

approach toward foreigners taken by the federal government, which involved positive educational efforts to enlist their support for the war.⁶⁷

Most interesting and puzzling, however, was the stance taken by the city's third largest paper, the Decorah Journal. Democratic in its politics and edited by a Norwegian-American, Fred Bierman, the paper had not responded when Harding first enunciated his policy. Yet no one could doubt the anti-foreign tone of two editorials in September. Both demonstrated that editor Bierman bore little sympathy for his countrymen or others who clung to their foreign heritage. The first, a reprint from the Des Moines paper of arch-Americanizer Lafayette Young, accused Norwegians of perpetuating their control over Winnesheik County politics by refusing to Americanize. "What chance," asked Young,

would a boy born in America of American parentage have in Winnesheik county? The Norwegians are good politicians. They know that just so long as they can perpetuate their language and keep up their groups, no other nationality need apply. If Americanization had done its work properly the Norwegians would not be in control of everything in Winnesheik. If the melting pot had melted, Winnesheik county would not be filled with Norwegian newspapers and Norwegian ministers. We say that these foreign groups should not exist. They interfere with the unity of the republic. Ninety percent of the discord in America is caused by these foreign groups in the various cities and states of the union. If the American people will keep their courage and stand together at the present time the foreign settlements can be compelled to blend with the other people.⁶⁸

The second piece, an independent editorial, attacked a recent decision by the Danish Young Peoples' Society to hold its convention at Omaha owing to the "undemocratic conditions" existing in Iowa. With this action, editor Bierman had little patience. "This republic cannot endure in peace and prosperity," he declared, "while it remains a 'polyglot boardinghouse'." The Danish young people should not begrudge the American language, he said. After all, if it "was good enough for the Constitution, good enough for Lincoln's Gettysburg speech, why is it not good enough for the Danish Young Peoples' Society of America?"⁶⁹

Quite obviously, Norwegian-Americans were not of one mind on Americanization, but the intense wartime situation now forced the issue--leaving them little choice but to accelerate their transition. Editor Fred Bierman's impulses finally led him to break sharply with his past. "I've been as guilty as anybody," he stated emphatically near the war's end. "I used to say 'I'm a Norwegian.' No more of that for me: 'I'm an American' now: This war will do much for our country, unless we lose our balance after the war. It should Americanize America. That's the big job at home."⁷⁰

Shades of opinion had long existed within Norwegian-American church congregations on how quickly to make the

transition to English. Norwegian attachments to their language had steadily loosened. A bilingual second generation was filling the church membership rolls and many congregations now gave the English language a larger place in their activities. Although the delicate transition, if mishandled, could split members into two quarrelsome elements, roughly one-fourth of all Norwegian Lutheran congregations in America had made the transition and regularly conducted their services in English by the time that America entered the war.⁷¹ But it was one thing to accept inevitable gradual adoption of English from within their national group and quite another to accept compulsion from without.⁷²

Editors of the official English organ of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America expressed only contempt for Harding's proclamation. "With possible patriotic intentions," a spokesman began, "persons entrusted with power and authority have yielded to the public clamor for a display, a vainglorious patriotism and given out entirely uncalled for orders and proclamations . . . so drastic and sweeping that they have been an insult and an injury to many law-abiding and patriotic citizens."⁷³ The church spokesman denounced Iowa's proclamation as "illogical prejudice and an entirely uncalled for infringement of personal and religious liberty" that would no doubt soon

be abandoned. Every citizen had a duty to learn the language of the country, but governmental attempts to "prohibit the preaching of the Gospel in any language which the people may desire," must be considered unconstitutional. "Let us not," he appealed, "stultify ourselves before the world and try to build a Chinese wall around our country and glory in the stupidity of advocating the use of only one language."⁷⁴

The panic brought on by Harding's language order extended beyond Iowa's Norwegian Lutheran congregations to complicate another war related issue. Owing to intense anti-foreign war spirit, many of the fearful agitated to drop the word "Norwegian" from the name of their national church. The issue quickly reached the floor for debate when the Norwegian Church of America convened its meeting at Fargo, North Dakota--this barely two weeks after Governor Harding's proclamation.⁷⁵ On the second day, two questions--increased church work in English and changing the organization's name--dominated the morning session. On the English question President Hans Gerhard Stub lamented that loyalty demanded forbearance and "because we are loyal, we obey such instructions as may seem unreasonable. For instance, that we cannot preach in any language but English. This has worked a hardship in some places, and it might be advisable to seek a modification

of such rulings, for instance, in the state of Iowa, where it came so suddenly and unlooked for."⁷⁶ As soon as the "name change" matter opened for discussion, Reverend Johan Skagen of Fenton, Iowa questioned whether they should even refer to the Iowa matter. The state's authorities, he feared, might misconstrue its meaning and "involve the churches [presently] using the Norwegian language in special difficulties."⁷⁷ He wanted to take a vote on the name change without discussion, but when another tried to help by moving to table the whole matter, President Stub ruled it out of order. Still other Iowans persisted. A Worth County pastor tried to postpone action by deferring the matter to a later meeting; Reverend Nils Brun of Winnebago County regretted that the time seems to have arrived to "give our 'mother' a kick by tearing ourselves away from the church of Norway"; Pastor Daniel Jordahl of a congregation located near Docorah protested that the change in name "would be looked upon with disfavor by the [churches'] large country charges."⁷⁸

Nevertheless, President Stub and other leaders who felt Americanization pressures most keenly, favored the change. Retaining the current name, they argued, would stigmatize them as a "foreign" church and hamper their work. Our members' faith "is the same regardless of language or nationality," declared Professor C. K. Preus,

president of Luther College in Decorah, who thought the name "American Lutheran" would be more fitting than "Norwegian Lutheran." "The best news which we can send Governor Harding of Iowa," said another, "is to tell him that the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America has struck the word 'Norwegian' from its name."⁷⁹ Discussion finally ended and one question lay before the delegates: should a committee prepare a resolution to change the name to one that the next convention in 1920 could adopt by constitutional amendment? Whether for reasons of wartime patriotism or a fateful sense of urgency demanded by the political situation, delegates overwhelmingly approved the motion in a standing vote of 533 to 61. (With wartime fears gone two years later, however, sentiment so reversed itself that, by a vote of 377 to 296, the convention would reject any name change.)⁸⁰

Before adjourning, the convention delegates designated a committee of three emissaries to meet with Governor Harding in hopes of adjusting the language question. When they were finally able to meet with the government on June 25, he informed them that where necessity demanded use of the Norwegian language, a satisfactory arrangement was possible. A pastor, for instance, might repeat a sermon first in Norwegian and then in English or give a morning sermon in English followed by a sermon in Norwegian in the

evening. But this should not be done, Harding warned, until the pastor first wrote to the governor and explained the conditions that warranted departing from provisions of his proclamation. If satisfied that real difficulties rather than any antagonism to English impelled the pastor to make his request, the governor would issue his consent. With permission thus in hand, the pastor stood protected from accusations of disloyalty for disregarding the proclamation.⁸¹

By August 1918, however, the arrangement had clearly broken down at the Governor's end. Pastors who wrote one or more times requesting permission to use the Norwegian language on certain occasions had never received answers. Evidently the governor's silence "gives consent to the arrangements suggested," inferred a Winnebago County editor, adding that "the majority of the ministers will conclude that he takes this method of granting his permission to disregard the drastic conditions of his language proclamation."⁸²

In light of the governor's inaction on the church matter as well as his numerous explanations and clarifications of the edict, it was little wonder that rumors circulated before the election that Harding had "backed down" on his proclamation. Actually he rather seemed to vacillate than retreat, depending on circumstances of the

moment. When he stood before the overflow crowd at the Decorah Opera House on September 26, the moment seemed to call for firmness. Although confining his speech mainly to general patriotic subjects, he offered a few forthright remarks on the language question. He thought he had been right in issuing the proclamation, and now, Harding said, he knew it. After loud applause to this statement by the friendly audience, he continued. Never could an immigrant grow an American soul so long as he "is thinking of his mother country, speaking her language, and living her life," he said. Although Harding recognized that "the variety of opinion on the language question was bound to hurt his popularity," he indicated that the question of the popular vote little bothered him.⁸³

The actual campaign between Governor Harding and Claude R. Porter, the Democratic candidate, opened only two weeks before the election. Spirited charges flew back and forth as to who should be considered the more patriotic candidate. Porter made little mention of the language controversy and did not have to; Harding had already solidified the ethnic vote for Porter. The Democratic candidate contented himself with oblique remarks about how Iowa needed a governor "who can Unify, Not Divide; Who Will Classify Citizens Not By Race Or Creed, But By The Sole Test of Patriotic Service."⁸⁴

Perhaps sensing that nativist votes might offset losses elsewhere, Governor Harding seemed far more willing to discuss the language question. "Why don't you come out in the open for or against one language in this country?" challenged the governor. He further accused Porter of having been afraid, as United States District Attorney, to act against German propaganda being spread by foreign language use.⁸⁵ Amidst this brief political battle, however, public apathy reigned--numerous newspapers commented about the lower-than-usual level of voter interest in this off-year election.⁸⁶

Predictions proved correct; Iowa voters cast one of the lightest votes in years. Among disaffected Norwegian settlements, however, greater numbers of people showed up to vote, holding declines in their turnout to less than one-half that of the state generally.⁸⁷

The vote against Harding most visibly demonstrated the trend of Norwegian feeling. Contrary to years past when Norwegian precincts cast Republican majorities of 20 to 30 percentage points over that of the state at large, this time the vote plummeted to 13 percentage points beneath Harding's statewide average.⁸⁸ This plunge of 43 percentage points from the average Republican vote cast since 1900 leaves no doubt about Norwegian dissatisfaction. Claude Porter piled up a large majority of votes in

Norwegian dominated Winnebago County to make him the first Democrat since the Civil War ever to receive a majority there for state office. Norwegian settlements clearly had joined with foreign language residents elsewhere to repudiate the governor.⁸⁹

Dwelling on the overall magnitude of Norwegian defection can leave a false impression, however. Despite general disappointment, uniform Norwegian sentiment simply cannot be asserted in the face of precinct returns that ranged all the way from 10 to 69 percent for Governor Harding. Obviously individual settlements had drawn different conclusions about the extent to which Governor Harding should be punished at the polls. What prompted it?⁹⁰

Ordinarily a good share of variation among Norwegian settlements drew from local county-wide influences such as the county-seat press and organized political parties. Where individual precincts voted alike, one might take this as evidence of the importance of county or state over local forces. Conversely, where the votes of precincts differed markedly, local influences cannot be easily discounted.⁹¹ In this particular election year, local forces appear to have predominated because two critical sources of county influence had temporarily ceased to operate. County newspapers avoided both the language issue

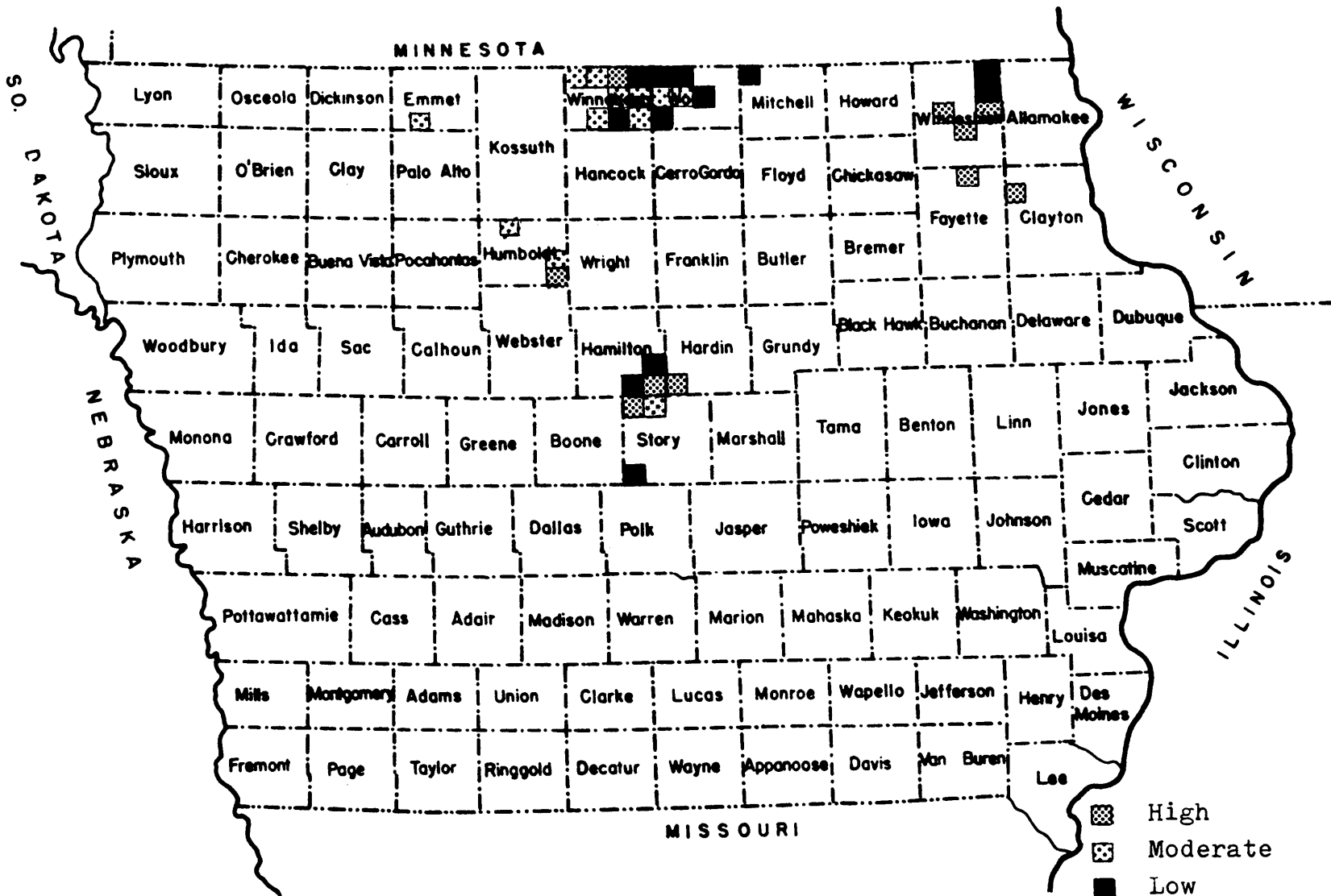


Figure 21. Norwegian Support for Governor Harding, 1918 Election.

and politics generally. And secondly, partisan politics had been generally suspended for the war's duration, which weakened the impact of county political parties. In Winnesheik County, for instance, the Democrats put forth no candidates for county offices and the other county candidates made no effort either to solicit votes or to get out the vote.⁹²

Although admittedly difficult to demonstrate, I suspect that Norwegian ministers became largely responsible for local voting differences that occurred. Here, in the language question, appeared an issue that threatened the very heart of immigrant church practices. Its "religious" prohibitions had particularly galled Norwegians and their anger had focused on that effect of the edict. And when it came to questions of this kind, threatening religious values and institutions, parishioners typically sought the opinions of their pastors, the symbols of tradition, language and learning in their communities. It is likely that the edict goaded to action many Norwegian pastors who ordinarily eschewed politics. The result: despite giving way to outward conformity demanded by the proclamation, most worked quietly to feed disenchantment against Governor Harding.

Of course, pastors did not uniformly influence their congregations. Some felt more strongly about the issue

than others; some felt more intimidated by the loyalty issue than others; some commanded more influence and respect or had lived among their charges for longer periods than others. These and other differences varied the efforts of voters to punish Harding's action.⁹³ While it is difficult to see indications of individual ministerial influence, an occasional clue has survived.⁹⁴

Two examples illustrate the connection between local ministers and the varied vote for Harding. Two heavily Norwegian townships of Winnesheik County lay in the north-eastern part of the county. Both settlements (Pleasant and Highland) had not rebuffed Harding as had the others and the apparent source of their behavior becomes clear when we view the townships as part of Norwegian church communities. When so considered, we see that the two townships formed a single unit in which Pastor Thore Olson Tolo served an estimated three-fourths of the total parishioners in both townships. The same effect is noticed in Hamilton County, where Harding's vote in Scott Township fell to one-half that given by Lincoln and Ellsworth townships. Although two or three pastors served each of the three townships, in Scott Township Norwegian language services predominated before Harding's proclamation, while the congregations of Lincoln and Ellsworth attended proportionately more English language services.

Furthermore, Pastor Martin Norstad may have felt more called upon than others to defend Harding's wartime measures, for besides ministering to many Lincoln and Ellsworth parishioners, he also during the war became local camp pastor for the United States Army.⁹⁵

In Iowa, a cultural issue had cut to the heart of church traditions and had evoked a strong but varied Norwegian-American response, one that at bottom probably reflected the personal views of local ministers. Although a cultural issue, the differing votes among settlements stemmed not from disagreement between Norwegian-American pietist and ritualist religious groupings. The issue this time had nothing to do with the state enforcing standards of public or private morality, and this brand of "activist" government was certainly not the kind for which Norwegian-American pietists yearned. Instead, the language question had stemmed from a weak rather than vicious governor who promulgated an edict that consequently divided foreign-born and native-born citizens. The question of how much cultural diversity the government should tolerate had twisted itself into a different form, and individual ministers faced this direct assault upon traditional Norwegian church practices in light of their local circumstances and personal convictions. This close

involvement of Norwegian-American pastors in gubernatorial elections did not repeat itself in Minnesota, where different conditions brought forth other sources of Norwegian-American leadership.

Once again in this and other chapters we see "variety" operating among Norwegian settlements. In different ways, a mix of issues and national, state or local circumstances had combined with varying Norwegian-American leadership to shape election outcomes.

NOTES

¹John L. Heaton, Cobb of 'The World' (New York, 1924), p. 270.

²See William Watts Folwell, A History of Minnesota (St. Paul, 1926), III, 538-556; Robert L. Morlan, Political Prairie Fire: The Nonpartisan League, 1915-1922 (Minneapolis, 1955); Theodore Christianson, Minnesota: A History of the State and Its People (Chicago, 1935), II, 367-370.

³Minneapolis (Minn.) Journal, May 6, 1918.

⁴On the League's wartime troubles, see O. A. Hilton, "The Minnesota Commission of Public Safety in World War I, 1917-1919," Bulletin of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Social Science Series Number 1 (Stillwater, 1951); Morlan, Political Prairie Fire, chap. viii. As for the heat of wartime emotions as it affected the League, examine almost any editorial page of the Minneapolis Journal during April through June of 1918.

⁵Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910; Vol. I: Population (Washington, 1913), 929.

⁶The Norwegian attitude toward the war and that of other Scandinavian countries was discussed by Dr. M. F. Egan before the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York Times, Feb. 22, 1918, p. 6; p. 6; O. J. Storm, "Public Opinion in Norway During the War," reprinted from France-Scandinavia in New York Times, May 14, 1918, p. 14.

⁷Impressed by what he had learned from a League organizer about their recruiting drives, a close advisor of Minnesota's Senator Knute Nelson wrote to the aging senator: The organizer "told me that he had charge of Brown, McLeod, Sibley and Nicollet Counties, that he had 28 workers under him in these counties and that they in turn have one or two men in each township. He showed me his record. He had a record of each farmer by town and range. He also had a blue print of each township with a

notation on each 40 if they had a member of the league there. This is about the most perfect paper organization I have ever seen." Simon Michelet to Knute Nelson, June 18, 1918, Knute Nelson Papers, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

⁸Morlan, Political Prairie Fire, p. 152; Hilton, "Minnesota Commission of Public Safety," p. 26.

⁹Morlan, Political Prairie Fire, p. 192; Bruce L. Larson, Lindbergh of Minnesota: A Political Biography (New York, 1971), pp. 229ff.; Charles B. Cheney, The Story of Minnesota Politics (Minneapolis, 1947), pp. 44-45; Minneapolis Journal, May 4, 1918; L. M. Willcuts to Knute Nelson, June 17, 1918, Nelson Papers. The full title of Lindbergh's book was Why Is Your Country at War and What Happens to You After the War and Related Subjects (Washington, 1917). It alleged that business interests and Wall Street had been responsible for the war.

¹⁰J. A. A. Burnquist to Arthur LeSueur, Mar. 11, 1918, Joseph A. A. Burnquist Papers, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota, quoted in Larson, Lindbergh of Minnesota, p. 222.

¹¹Prices of milk and dairy products in the early 1920's stayed roughly equal in purchasing power to what dairymen had enjoyed during the half-decade before World War I. To compensate in Wisconsin, the Nonpartisan League tried by coalition with labor and socialist organizations to expand beyond its several thousand members in northern and southeastern sections of the state. But postwar voters found progressive rhetoric economically radical enough for them and devoted more attention to the issues of prohibition enforcement, Catholicism, tax reform and economy in government. In Iowa, corn belt farmers suffered acutely under the postwar agricultural depression, but worked their grievances out through the conservative Farm Bureau Federation and the Republican party. Mainly through the spirited senatorial campaigns of Smith Brookhart, who emerged as a champion of the small farmer and of labor elements, did the victims of the depression politically express their discontent. In general Republican hegemony remained supreme. See Oliver E. Baker, "Agricultural Regions of North America, Part V--The Hay and Dairying Belt," Economic Geography, IV (1928), 72-73, and his "Agricultural Regions of North America, Part IV--The Corn Belt," Economic Geography, III (1927), 462; Robert C. Nesbit, Wisconsin: A History

(Madison, 1973), pp. 461-468; Leland L. Sage, A History of Iowa (Ames, 1974), pp. 264-265.

¹²Ole O. Sageng to Knute Nelson, Dec. 20, 1917, Nelson Papers.

¹³Benson (Minn.) Swift County Review, Feb. 26, 1918.

¹⁴Ibid. Nevertheless, Swift County's Public Safety Commission went ahead and ordered that "the sheriff prevent any meetings of the Non-partisan League in the county by organizers not residents of this section." Appleton (Minn.) Press, Mar. 1, 1918.

¹⁵Swift County Review, June 11, 1918.

¹⁶William E. Leuchtenburg, The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1932 (Chicago, 1958), pp. 128-129.

¹⁷Swift County Review, Jun. 4, 11, 1918.

¹⁸Fergus Falls (Minn.) Daily Journal, Nov. 4, 1918.

¹⁹Fergus Falls (Minn.) Free Press, Nov. 13, 1918.

²⁰Willmar (Minn.) Tribune, Aug. 22, 1917.

²¹Nonpartisan Leader, quoted in Morlan, Political Prairie Fire, p. 154.

²²Willmar Tribune, Oct. 10, 1917.

²³Morlan, Political Prairie Fire, p. 156.

²⁴Fergus Falls Free Press, Oct. 10, 1917.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Oct. 11, 1918. See also issue of Oct. 18.

²⁷Morlan, Political Prairie Fire, p. 156.

²⁸Secretary of State, Legislative Manual of the State of Minnesota, 1919 (Minneapolis, 1919), pp. 318-322, 326-328, 796.

²⁹Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, June 20, 1918. Sageng's disenchantment with the League went back to at

least early 1917. See Ole Sageng to Boyle, Feb. 19, 1917, Ole Sageng Papers, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

³⁰Fergus Falls Free Press, Mar. 27, 1918; Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, May 22, 1924.

³¹Fergus Falls Free Press, Mar. 27, 1918.

³²Secretary of State, Minnesota Legislative Manual, pp. 692, 712.

³³Willmar Tribune, Apr. 24, May 1, 1918; Morlan, Political Prairie Fire, p. 197.

³⁴Willmar Tribune, June 5, 1918.

³⁵Ibid., June 5, 12, 1918. When Burnquist announced his candidacy for re-election, he declared that no political speeches would be made because they might divert public attention away from the war by "the stirring up of untimely issues in contests for public offices." Minneapolis Journal, May 6, 1918.

³⁶Ibid., Jun. 19, 1918.

³⁷Willmar Tribune, Jun. 19, 1918. The June 26 issue reports that the Willmar Commercial Club passed a resolution emphatically denying knowledge of any threats or violence contemplated against the farmers parade that occurred the previous week about which reports had "been extensively circulated and published throughout the farming communities. . . ."

³⁸Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, May 2, 9, 1918.

³⁹Fergus Falls Free Press, February 20, 1918. As editor Odland put it, "The bitter enemies of the League, including the Fergus Falls Journal and our friend Elmer, have diligently tried to convey the impression that the farmers who have joined the Nonpartisan League have nothing to say, and will have nothing to say, as to League affairs--that Townley is everything. . . ."

⁴⁰Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Mar. 21, 1918. That the League should "ignore two of the most faithful and able representatives that the farmers ever had in this county, Senator Ole Sageng and H. A. Putnam" the Journal cited as evidence that "Mr. Townley has got to have the

right kind of men or he can not run things, and Sageng and Putnam are not his kind of farmers."

⁴¹Ibid., May 30, Jun. 6, 1918.

⁴²Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, Jun. 13, 1918. See also R. K. Braugh to Knute Nelson, Jun. 15, 1918, Nelson Papers.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid., June 20, 1918.

⁴⁵Letter-to-editor from J. L. Rots dated June 9, 1918 and printed in Fergus Falls Free Press, June 12, 1918. See also Sageng's partial response in the Fergus Falls Weekly Journal, June 20, 1918.

⁴⁶Minnesota's League membership is cited in Morlan, Political Prairie Fire, p. 201, while members in Iowa is noted in Theodore Saloutos and John D. Hicks. Agricultural Discontent in the Middle West 1900-1939 (Madison, 1951), p. 189.

⁴⁷Morlan, Political Prairie Fire, p. 177; Saloutos and Hicks, Agricultural Discontent, p. 190.

⁴⁸This capsule summary of Harding's pre-1918 career is based on John E. Visser, "William Lloyd Harding and the Republican Party in Iowa, 1906-1920" (doctoral dissertation, University of Iowa, 1957).

⁴⁹Nathaniel R. Whitney, "The First Three Liberty Loans In Iowa," Iowa and War, No. 15, ed. Benjamin F. Shambaugh (Iowa City, 1918), p. 2. See also the author's larger work, The Sale of War Bonds in Iowa, ed. Benjamin F. Shambaugh, Iowa Chronicles of the World War (Iowa City, 1923), pp. 30, 127-128, 148-149, 167-169.

⁵⁰Visser, "William Lloyd Harding," pp. 236, 252.

⁵¹Problems on the Mackey Telephone line in Glidden are reported in the Decorah Public Opinion, May 1, 1918.

⁵²My conclusion that the proclamation was largely due to the governor's weakness of character and the forcefulness of his advisors rests partly on the contemporary observations of James Pierce, publisher of the Iowa Homestead. What I find compelling in Visser's account is

not his acceptance at face value of Harding's explanation for issuing the edict, but his broader conclusion that without "strong personality or group behind him," Harding was "rudderless." This weakness became especially pronounced after his close advisor, George D. Perkins of the Sioux City Journal died in 1914. "From that point on," says Visser, Governor Harding "accepted the advice of far lesser men, many of whom used him mercilessly for their own selfish ends." See Visser, pp. 315-316. This judgment corresponds closely to the views that James Pierce expressed during the 1918 election campaign. Although the publisher had recently broken with Harding over certain issues, Pierce had remained in general agreement with the governor's language proclamation. The publisher did think, however, that the governor's poor handling of the language matter reinforced his own doubts about Harding's qualities of leadership generally. In Pierce's estimation, Harding's advisors pushed him into issuing the language order because "it is not the kind of thing that Governor Harding ever does of his own free will." Specifically, the publisher concluded that "the chairman of his council of defense, Lafe Young, with whom the subject had become an obsession, simply sneaked up on Governor Harding's blind side and wheddled him into it." Refer, Des Moines (Ia.) Iowa Homestead, Oct. 24, 1918.

⁵³The proclamation laid down four rules to be in effect for the war's duration. "First. English should and must be the only medium of instruction in public, private, denominational or other similar schools; Second. Conversation in public places, on trains and over the telephone should be in the English language; Third. All public addresses should be in the English language; Fourth. Let those who cannot speak or understand the English language conduct their religious worship in their homes." Refer, "Iowa War Proclamations," Iowa and War, No. 13, ed. Benjamin F. Shambaugh (Iowa City, 1918), pp. 43-46.

⁵⁴Cedar Rapids (Ia.) Evening Gazette, May 30, 1918. See also the staff editorial comments in the issues of May 26, 27, 1918.

⁵⁵The split between the Des Moines (Ia.) Register and Governor Harding began several years before 1918. In some respects the language controversy became simply one more phase of the struggle. The Register had particularly criticized Harding's lukewarm advocacy of prohibition and his 1916 move to sidetrack the "good-roads" movement in

addition to other reasons. Consequently William Lloyd Harding read little about himself in the columns of the Des Moines Register that rose above faint praise or unflattering comment.

⁵⁶Majority support behind Harding's edict noted in Ames (Ia.) Evening Times, June 29, 1918; Sioux City (Ia.) Tribune staff editorial reprinted in the Des Moines Register, May 31, 1918.

⁵⁷The reported remarks had been to the effect that, despite having come from the filth of Denmark to benefit from what this country can offer and despite having lived for years in the settlements of Shelby and Audubon counties, the young people when grown are still 100 per cent Dane. For details see, Peter L. Peterson, "Language and Loyalty: Governor Harding and Iowa's Danish-Americans During World War I," Annals of Iowa, XLII (Fall, 1974), 411-415; Des Moines Register, Aug. 8, 26, 1918.

⁵⁸All daily issues of the Des Moines Register between May 23 and Nov. 10, 1918 were examined to identify the column inches of space given over the language order.

⁵⁹Less than one percentage point separated the average fall in support by the two groups; Norwegian precincts declined 38.73 percentage points and Danish settlements by 39.56 percentage points. Average republican voting levels by Dane settlements were figured on the basis of votes cast in five previous elections by a cluster of five precincts (Oakfield Township and Sharon Township plus Kimballtown Village, in Audubon County; and Elkhorn Township and Village, Jackson Township and Monroe Township in Shelby County).

⁶⁰Quoted in the Des Moines Register, Jun. 1, 1918.

⁶¹Sioux City Tribune staff editorial reprinted in Des Moines Register, May 31, 1918.

⁶²I examined the newspapers of five counties where Norwegians were most concentrated (Winnebago, Winnesheik, Worth, Story and Hamilton). This encompassed all issues of all newspapers between May 23 and November 15, 1918 for which copies exist at either the Division of Museum and Archives (Des Moines) or the Division of the State Historical Society (Iowa City). The eleven newspapers, listed in alphabetical order, included: Ames Evening Times (daily); Decorah Journal; Decorah Public Opinion;

Decorah Republican; Forest City Summit; Osage, Mitchell County Press; Manley Signal and the Kensett News; Story City Herald; Webster City Freeman; Northwood, Worth County Index.

⁶³Letter-to-the-editor printed in Forest City Summit, Jun. 6, 1918.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Decorah Public Opinion, Jun. 26, 1918; see also its issues of Jul. 3, 17, and 24, 1918.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷How this education program had worked locally was described, which indicated how wartime propaganda reached Norwegian citizens. It read:

As an evidence of how the [Federal] government looks at the question, one may take the placards that are posted in public places throughout the country stating in Norwegian and German, as well as in English, 'Why We Are At War.' Coming closer to home, we may take the case of President C. K. Preus, of Luther College, who at the request of the government, made two speeches in the Norwegian language in Allamakee county so that the older Americans of Norwegian birth could readily grasp the fundamental principles of the third Liberty Loan drive. We might also cite the fact that Prof. Oscar L. Olson, also of Luther College, was requested to head an organization in the state of Iowa for the dissemination of information in the Norwegian language among forty thousand citizens of the state regarding the Liberty Loan.

⁶⁸Des Moines (Ia.) Capital staff editorial reprinted in Decorah Journal, September 18, 1918.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Decorah Journal, November 13, 1918.

⁷¹E. Clifford Nelson, The Lutheran Church Among Norwegian-Americans: A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Minneapolis, 1960), II, 241ff.

⁷²Lutheran Church Herald, II (1918), 360-361. Those in the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America who favored a more rapid transition found their position expressed in the church's weekly publication, the Lutheran Church Herald.

Published in the English language, this official organ had been established several years earlier to quicken the steps being taken toward greater English use that were proceeding upward through Sunday School, young peoples societies, instruction for confirmation and finally in church services and business meetings. Editors of the Herald persistently repeated the view that "the Norwegian language should be considered merely temporary" in carrying out church work.

⁷³Lutheran Church Herald, II (1918), 360-361. See also further editorial comments in the issues of Nov. 26, 1918, 760-761; and Dec. 17, 1918, 801. Seven items of comment appeared in the Herald during 1918 regarding governmental measures to bar the use of foreign languages.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵For my discussion of proceedings at the Fargo Convention, I relied on a report entitled "Fargo Convention," Lutheran Church Herald, II (1918), 371-372; and a report reprinted from the Fargo (No. Dak.) Forum by the Forest City Summit, Jun. 13, 1918. Considerable discussion about changing the name of the church had preceded the Fargo meeting. Ten articles and comments appeared in the Lutheran Church Herald between Apr. 19 and Aug. 2, 1918.

⁷⁶Fargo Forum report reprinted in Forest City Summit, Jun. 13, 1918.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Lutheran Church Herald, II (1918), 372.

⁸⁰Nelson, The Lutheran Church, p. 249.

⁸¹Lutheran Church Herald, II (1918), 417.

⁸²Forest City Summit, Aug. 8, 1918.

⁸³Decorah Journal, Oct. 9, 1918. See also Decorah Republican, Oct. 9, 1918 and Decorah Public Opinion, October 9, 1918. As circumstances dictated, Governor Harding seemed to retreat from or vigorously defend his proclamation. Unyielding resistance is visible in a reprint of a Harding letter contained in the Ames Evening

Times, Jun. 15, 1918. Other examples of explanations that ranged from clarification to near capitulation are as follows: staff editorial entitled "Be Fair With Governor," Ames Evening Times, Aug. 8, 1918, which reprints Harding's letter to a county attorney inquiring about prosecutions relating to violations of the language order; Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette, May 29, 1918 and May 30, 1918; Ottumwa Courier editorial reprinted in the Des Moines Register, Jun. 6, 1918.

⁸⁴Iowa Homestead, Oct. 24, 1918.

⁸⁵Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette, Oct. 29, 1918.

⁸⁶See for example, Ames Evening Times, Oct. 25, Nov. 4, 1918; Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette, Oct. 25, Nov. 5, 1918; Des Moines Register, Nov. 3, 1918.

⁸⁷The statewide level of voter turnout dropped ten percentage points from the average combined vote of the past three off-year elections (i.e., 1914, 1910, 1906) while the vote of Norwegian precincts fell only four percentage points from their previous levels.

⁸⁸The Republican vote of Norwegian precincts from 1901 to 1916 averaged 79.9 percent and that of Iowa 52.6 percent. In 1918 Governor Harding's vote held at 50.6 percent while that of Norwegian precincts fell to 37.3 percent.

⁸⁹Where Harding's majority over his opponent of two years before had been abnormally large, this year it was abnormally small--slightly less than fourteen thousand votes. This was an uncomfortably small margin for a party accustomed to majorities of twenty thousand or more votes. All agreed that the governor's language proclamation had cost him the most votes. See Des Moines Register, Nov. 6, 1918; Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette, Nov. 7, 1918; Decorah Public Opinion, Nov. 13, 1918; Webster City Freeman, Nov. 11, 1918.

⁹⁰Two possible explanations initially came to mind. One is that the diverging votes simply reflected, in exaggerated form, long standing tendencies for some precincts to be weaker in their Republicanism than others. A second possibility is that some precincts were more sensitive than others to accusations of Norwegian-American disloyalty to the war effort. I discounted the first possibility after finding no association between the 1918

gubernatorial vote and the average Republican vote given in the three previous general elections for governor. As for the second idea, that some more militantly resented aspirations being cast against Norwegian-American loyalty than others, I assumed that the more militant precincts would also have voted more heavily for Congressman Gilbert N. Haugen. The Norwegian-American congressman's loyalty had been seriously questioned because of his negative vote against preparedness legislation during the previous session. But a comparison of the votes cast for Governor Harding and Congressman Haugen within the Fourth Congressional District failed to confirm this line of thought.

⁹¹Similar votes marked Norwegian townships in Winnebago and Worth counties and dissimilar votes characterized those of Winnesheik and Hamilton counties. In Winnebago County, the Harding vote in five out of seven Norwegian voting units closely clustered about the 30 percent mark while in neighboring Worth County, though showing less precinct uniformity, five out of six Norwegian precincts voted more strongly for Harding than did their counterparts in Winnebago County. The weaker vote for Harding in Winnebago County precincts may be partly due to the agrarian influence of the Iowa Homestead. This influential agricultural paper had broken with Harding over his indecisive handling of cases where farmer's rights had been violated by would-be patriots. But more importantly, the editor linked Harding to those who wanted to suppress activities of the Nonpartisan League--a movement with which the editor and many Winnebago grain farmers sympathized.

The impact of county or state influences over local forces loses persuasiveness as an explanation where sharp differences among Norwegian precincts arose within the same county, as was the case in Winnesheik and Hamilton counties. Support for Harding tumbled drastically in three Norwegian precincts of Winnesheik County (Madison, 10 percent; Glenwood, 20 percent; Springfield, 24 percent), but the governor suffered far less in two others (Highland, 51 percent; Pleasant, 45 percent). Similarly in Hamilton County, while two south-eastern townships gave a majority and near majority for Harding (Lincoln, 54 percent; Ellsworth, 47 percent), adjoining Scott township could muster only 23 percent of its vote for the governor. Quite obviously, for some counties, circumstances within Norwegian localities strongly influenced the vote.

⁹²Decorah Republican, Nov. 14, 1918. See also, Ames Evening Times, Oct. 25, Nov. 4, 1918.

⁹³I attempted, but with inconclusive results, to go one step further and determine whether the more "Americanized" church precincts (i.e., those with proportionately greater numbers of English language services) were less offended by the language proclamation. Statistics on numbers of English and Norwegian language services were obtained from Beretning om Den Norsk Lutherske Kirkes (Minneapolis, 1918), pp. 580-586.

⁹⁴Most precincts defied analysis because they either contained several Norwegian churches with several pastors or the rate of pastor turnover within congregations was such that specific influence on their part could not be presumed.

⁹⁵Pastor Thore Olson Tolo served Big Canoe Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran and Highland Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran churches. Pastor Martin Norstad served three churches: (1) Bethesda, in Jewell; (2) Clear Lake and Ellsworth, 8 miles S.W. of Jewell; and (3) Zion, 7 miles N.W. of Jewell. Locations of Norwegian churches and their pastors were derived from O. M. Norlie, Norsk Lutherske Menigheter i America, 1843-1916 (Minneapolis, 1918), I, pp. 329-331; II, p. 520; and Beretning om Den Norsk Lutherske Kirke, pp. 580-586; Rasmus Malmin, O. M. Norlie, and O. A. Tingelstad, trans. and comps., Who's Who Among Pastors in All the Norwegian Lutheran Synods of America, 1843-1927, 3rd ed. rev. (Minneapolis, 1928), pp. 422, 600.

CONCLUSION
LIMITS OF ETHNOCULTURAL THEORY

"All history not narrated by those who were the chief actors," concluded Haldor Boen, "is of very little value."¹ The former congressman had just finished reading an account of the role played by him and others in the Populist agitation of the 1890's. He sensed that the distance of intervening years as easily obscures the color and tone of earlier times as much as they illuminate its trends and patterns. The kind of cohesive, internally consistent historical narrative Boen read evidently seemed a far cry from the entanglement of unstable loyalties, issues, mutual obligations, compromises, inertia and indifference that characterized the agrarian politics he had personally experienced. Bad choices, wrong turnings, lost opportunities and factional spirit all appeared to him to have played fateful roles in Populist defeat.

Historians indeed find it convenient to describe voters of Norwegian-American settlements as "unrelentingly progressive," "rock-ribbed Republican," "hide-bound and clannish," or "unswervingly pietistic." Such descriptions make a complicated story manageable, but also make

Norwegian-American political behavior essentially one-dimensional, lacking the complexity its participants had known.

Since the 1960's the closest observers of past American political life have been those identified with the "ethnocultural school" of historians. The ethnocultural analysis has been and continues to be a healthy antidote to our earlier mechanistic and oversimplified socioeconomic versions of American political history. It has shifted the focus from broad national issues, class ideologies, and prominent leaders to the states and localities where political parties immediately felt at first hand the force of clashing attitudes produced by European immigration and cultural heterogeneity. Here historians find that cultural conflict was rife--that politics stemmed from ethnic hatreds, religious chauvinism, xenophobia, bigotry, and resistance to conformist pressures.

While this focus offers intelligent insights and has brought needed balance to the historical record, it remains inadequate; if historians turn to exploring only how religion and national origins shaped voters' partisanship, the result may be, as has been suggested, to replace "a monocausal and simplistic economic interpretation with an equally simplistic and monocausal cultural

interpretation."² The midwestern political experience of Norwegian-Americans prominently displays inadequacies of the ethnocultural approach to past voting behavior.

I

Most striking is perhaps this: patterns of Norwegian-American party alignment reveal that no particular ethnocultural or economic effect ever operated independently of the pronounced intervening influence of a state's political culture. State boundaries made for differences. Each state bears the stamp of unique determinants that shape its political structures, patterns of partisan organization and electoral behavior. Political culture-- arising from a state's historical experiences relating to party arrangements, social structure, economic and ethnic divisions and so on--constituted the framework controlling the ways in which issues are and were raised and resolved. And, as a breakdown of the votes in Chapter II indicates, Norwegian-American settlements responded accordingly. In Iowa their Republicanism remained steadfast but unenergetic, their internal divisions rooted in ethnoreligious conflicts, while economic forces and movements that shaped persons' lives in Minnesota produced strikingly opposite effects. Political alternatives in Wisconsin, however, encouraged voters in heavily Norwegian-American

settlements to exhibit stronger than average turnout rates and turn to left-of-center Republicanism.

The great questions animating politics between 1880 and 1924--prohibition, Populism, progressivism and the internal security issues during World War I--all played themselves out differently in each state and the differences showed up in the votes of Norwegian-American settlements. Prohibition so punctuated Iowa politics during the 1880's that Norwegian-American settlements divided on the question here, but not elsewhere. Populism strongly moved voters in the group's wheat-growing settlements of northwestern Minnesota, but not elsewhere. Candidates of the progressive wing of the Republican party drew especially pronounced support from Wisconsin's Norwegian-American settlements, but not elsewhere. And, for vastly different reasons, the political acrimony of World War I sowed defection among Norwegian-American settlements in Iowa and polarized sentiment among their counterparts in Minnesota, but not in Wisconsin.³

But even while a state's political culture opened up or choked off chances that particular economic or cultural questions would find political life, a second non-ethnocultural factor--period of settlement--limited the interest such questions could arouse in elements of an ethnic group. Because massive swings of public opinion and

reformism separating political eras effectively stamped certain emerging electorates with a shared set of experiences and attitudes, Samuel P. Huntington singles out "differing experiences and priorities of successive generations" as having been one of the two most significant forms of past conflict in America.⁴ This "generational rhythm of American politics," as Daniel J. Elazar terms it,⁵ has been noted since the time of Thomas Jefferson, but its influence on arriving immigrant groups has been ignored. Each wave of Norwegian immigrants saw American political life a bit differently because its time of arrival coincided with a different stage in the evolution of national and state politics. The initial period of a community's settlement proved especially important. Unencumbered by the inertia of past party loyalties, the first generation was exceptionally sensitive to immediate political issues and, being the founders, their own partisanship set the allegiances that later generations in the settlement were inclined to follow.

The more turbulent the politics of a period, the more distinct generational impression they apparently left on the newest Norwegian-American settlements. We see this in noting that America's great electoral realignments of the 1860's and the 1890's coincided with the emergence of the two most conspicuous generations of Norwegian-American

settlements--the first clinging to Republicanism and the second engulfed by agrarian third-party radicalism. A third, less cohesive, group of settlements, established during the more uncertain decade following the Civil War, embraced Republicanism, but less enthusiastically than earlier arrivals as shown by their more ambivalent vote during times when economic questions assumed center stage.

The Norwegian-American political experience suggests yet another major criticism of the ethnocultural model. Ethnocultural politics evidently had far more to do with negative reference groups than it did the "pietist-liturgical" dichotomy that others have so forcefully asserted in explaining Norwegian-American voting. The settlements cast consistently solid majorities against Democratic candidates, and this reflected their animus toward what they considered the party of Popery. This pattern dissolved only on rare occasions when a Scandinavian Democrat reached for high office or in places like Otter Tail County, where flourishing agrarian discontent kept Norwegian-American settlements voting the Populist ticket even after several positions of leadership had been captured, as one Norwegian-American put it, by a "handful of oily-tongued Irish Democrats."⁶ True, Norwegian anti-Catholicism found its limits in the failure of the American Protective Association to expand itself

into these areas of economic discontent, but the record of anti-Democratic voting continued to be a far more uniform and predictable feature of Norwegian-American settlements than was their support for Republican candidates.

Most ethnocultural historians seem unwilling, however, to let the strength of ethnocultural influences rest with the enormously useful concept of the negative reference group. Paul Kleppner, for instance, recognizes the staunch anti-Democratic voting of Norwegian-American settlements, but avoids anti-Catholicism altogether in arguing that it stemmed from religious pietism.⁷ This is only a part of the more ambitious effort by Kleppner and others to explain what the Norwegian-Americans found positively attractive in the Republicans. Their resulting concept is that differing group responses toward the Republican party derived from groups' differing doctrinal orientations along the continuum of pietist to liturgical religious values. Voters, it is held, cast their ballots in support of the political party that appealed to their pietist or liturgical beliefs. In the case of Norwegian-American Lutherans--divided among churches of the liturgical Norwegian Synod, the moderately pietist United Lutheran Norwegian Church, and the highly pietist Hauges' Synod--the ethnocultural historians argue that the more

pietistic of the faithful were most moved to Republicanism. This is allegedly due to the party's acceptance of the state having legitimate authority to regulate and control public morality, the thrust of which, in Kleppner's words, was to "reach out and purge the world of sin."⁸

But while this imaginative concept often plausibly explains variability among nationality groups, it falls apart upon confronting pronounced voting differences among Norwegian-American settlements belonging to the same pietist or liturgical church synod. An absence of division between the votes of pietist and liturgical settlements, we have seen, was the case in both Wisconsin and Minnesota throughout the period under study. And as for liquor legislation and its enforcement--the ethnoculturalists' dominant theme--we find that instances of pietist settlements differing from liturgical settlements occurred nowhere else but in Iowa, where prohibition had specifically been made a dominant issue--perhaps the dominant issue--in politics since before the Civil War. Norwegian-American settlements only polarized on prohibition, in other words, where encouraged--indeed, perhaps, required--to do so by virtue of the polarization of the entire political culture on liquor.

The final, and to me the most startling, finding is that the sum total influence of what I had selected as

indicators of ethnocultural or socioeconomic forces never accounted for more than half the observed voting differences. This held true among Norwegian-American settlements in each state as well as for the region as a whole. Although the linear relationship of such characteristics to votes often accounted for from 20 to 40 percent of variations--thus making such explorations surely worth one's time--analyses that look mainly to the singular force of either broad ethnocultural or socioeconomic factors evidently miss a good deal of what was going on. My modest quantitative analysis--although involving mainly frequencies and percentages--uncovered great variety. This is consistent with my view that the varied response by settlements often seemed due to the uneven qualities of opinion leaders operating at various levels--juggling issues and events to capitalize on immediate voter aspirations and discontents. This I found unexpected, given the neglect by ethnocultural historians of personalities. It augurs a caution to historians that, if they ignore or play down features of the immediate political situation in pursuit of the inertial elements of midwestern politics, they risk misinterpreting the historical record.

A good share of this problem with the ethnocultural approach has to do with what I believe to be its time-bound

quality, its implicit projecting back to another era of certain findings from persuasively stated studies of the Eisenhower period that have been conducted by the Michigan Survey Research Center.⁹ The resemblance between the two appears in the cloudy issue perceptions shown to characterize the electorate, as well as in the transcendent importance assigned to group influences for explaining the dynamics of issues and political tactics. Although later analyses have revealed that issues and candidates importantly moved voters in subsequent presidential elections, thus demonstrating that voter behavior of the 1950's cannot easily be generalized to other eras, the effects of the orientation continue to live on in the ethnocultural approach. Here, by virtue of the emphasis placed on the long-term behavioral characteristics of groups, the comparative inattention paid to the short-term influences of issues and personalities, except insofar as the latter appealed to voters' religious or ethnic predispositions, came to be infused in the work of historians. This error may be summarized as undue "neglect of the immediate political environment."¹⁰

This neglect--one I shared at the outset of this study--is manifested in a proclivity to view the qualities of political figures and the issues they espoused as being uninfluential in their own right, important only as they

ignited the underlying nationality or religious predispositions assumed to have "really" divided voters. The stories of political struggle in localities of Otter Tail and Trempealeau counties and elsewhere contradict this assumption. In Otter Tail County from 1891 to 1894, for example, agrarian politics breathed with non-ideological factionalism between Haldor Boen, John Hompe, Charles Brandborg and others. Factionalism prompted Boen's ouster from Alliance circles, it underlay the disruptive events surrounding the killing of the young Swede, it brought about Boen's sudden return to leadership over the new Populist party, and it exacerbated his bitter 1894 re-election defeat by opening the way for enemies to transform his fading prospects into a political exile. Boen's admirers praised his courage and indomitable leadership, while his enemies castigated his all consuming ambition for office and his reckless dictatorial manner. Boen himself still felt the bitterness a decade later: "I was so shamefully abused, villified and slandered, that I determined to withdraw from political life. I longed for some one to raise his voice in my defense; but nothing but abuse did meet me."¹¹ Norwegian-American Populists naturally took sides. Boen succeeded in some Norwegian-American townships far more than in others, depending on the political influence of his local friends and the

strength of his Norwegian-American opponents. In Boen's home township of Aurdal, for instance, weaker than expected support came to him, evidently due in large measure to the intense antagonism of a staunch Republican, the Reverend Ole N. Fosmark. Whatever the reasons--Boen's divorce, or their clashing personalities--relations between the two so deteriorated that Fosmark ultimately forced Boen's excommunication.¹²

Election campaigns proved to be acrimonious, personally bitter and divisive, aimed as much at undermining the personal popularity of candidates as with cultivating ethnic and religious animosities. Voter reactions to a politician's winning personality and immediate political issues reached to every level of politics. Who would deny the effect, for example, of the powerful Chicago Skandinaven publishing repeated allegations to its readers that Minnesota's Ignatius Donnelly was an "industrious liar" and "unscrupulous demagogue," fastening himself on the farmers' movement only for the sake of his own "personal benefit and ambition,"¹³ or of the polarized personal reactions that Wisconsin's press accorded Robert M. LaFollette through his years of political struggle in that faction-ridden state?

Leaders and political issues were not merely incidental aspects of stubborn cultural determinants. Issues

and events and party organizations decided which Norwegian-American politicians rose to power. And the effect of these, when combined with a politician's own personal qualities, aided or curbed what he might do, and often decided how the Norwegian-American electorate might vote. The bland politics of Wisconsin's Republican congressman Nils Haugen would have stood little chance among western Minnesota farmers. Conversely Minnesota's radical Populist congressman, Haldor Boen, undoubtedly would have gotten nowhere in Congressman Gilbert Haugen's orthodox Republican district in northern Iowa.

II

These principal findings all suggest a major defect of the ethnocultural approach, an unwarranted assumption that various ethnocultural predispositions of an ethnic group operate independently regardless of time and place.¹⁴ Perhaps sensing these inadequacies, Paul Kleppner recently called for studies that deal with political behavior of a single group "across a variety of different states," and Samuel P. Hays indicated that an "underemphasized" type of analyses are those of "subcultural variation within each identifiable ethnocultural group, for each group was far from homogeneous."¹⁵

Purely cultural considerations divorced from political realities imposed by space, time and circumstance simply do not explain many differences in Norwegian-American politics. The settlements, in fact, responded both to economic and cultural situations. They expressed their level of prosperity in Iowa and southeastern Minnesota, for example, by voting their contentment with orthodox Republican politics, although adhering to Robert M. LaFollette's brand of progressive Republicanism in Wisconsin and, at the furthest extreme, expressing their economic discontents in the third party politics of western and northwestern Minnesota.

Given this sensitivity to economic influences, one might reconsider the socioeconomic model of American political history, which fits several particulars of the Norwegian-American experience. Since many of their number were visibly associated with the turbulent Populist and Nonpartisan League movements and with Robert LaFollette's cause in Wisconsin, it is tempting to argue that socioeconomic concerns superceded ethnocultural predispositions among Norwegian-Americans, leading them to embrace left-of-center politics. By such reasoning the motivating element would be not economic determinism--voting one's class position--but an agrarian antimonopolism that demanded state intervention on behalf of wresting vulnerable free

enterprise from the grip of irresponsible monopolies on money and banking, railroads, and land.¹⁶ Whether Norwegian-American antimonopolist sympathies originated in agrarian suspicions carried from the old country or, as one writer claims, from a Norwegian folk heritage impelling them toward a co-operative commonwealth, or perhaps from a conspiratorial "devil" theory of history somehow equating the power of economic monopoly with Catholicism, I am unable to say.¹⁷ But the fact that thousands of Norwegian-American farmers found such socio-economic rhetoric attractive is a telling indication that the ethnocultural model, in its current formulation, at least, is inadequate.

To ethnoculturalists, however, economic factors have been paramount only during brief periods. Richard Jensen, for example, offers a "dual politics" version in his Winning of the Midwest. He reasons that ethnocultural conflicts ordinarily absorbed voters' attention while economic discontents held sway during times of "economic crisis."¹⁸ A variation of this for the Norwegian-American electorate might be that agrarian radicalism motivated them during hard times and anti-Catholicism motivated them during other times. There is some truth to these propositions, but not much more with respect to Norwegian-American settlements. The contrary can equally be

demonstrated by recalling that anti-Catholicism among Norwegian-Americans especially asserted itself during the hard times of the 1890's and that economic radicalism especially flourished during the agriculturally prosperous years of World War I. Furthermore, the Republican vote continued to sag in the settlements of northwestern Minnesota for years beyond the period of their Populist involvement during the "hard times" of the nineties.

On the other hand, to go to the opposite extreme and contend that left-of-center Republicanism or radical politics was the "natural level" to which Norwegian-Americans aspired would be clearly to overstate the case. One need only recall that orthodox Republicanism apparently prevailed among Iowa's Norwegian settlements and that neither Populism nor the Nonpartisan League drew many adherents in the settlements of Wisconsin. Moreover, in southeastern Minnesota during Populist and Nonpartisan League times, the average vote of Norwegian-American settlements aligned itself with that of the surrounding region in firmly rejecting candidates of these movements.

III

Thus I must conclude that a strictly ethnocultural explanation applied to the mixed partisanship of Norwegian-American settlements is insufficient. The

obvious next question, however, is, can a better alternative be offered that more realistically grasps the group's prominent electoral patterns between 1880 and 1924? I believe one can.

We must begin by recognizing, contrary to Samuel P. Hays' flat assertion that "party differences in voting were cultural, not economic," Norwegian-American party differences were cultural and economic.¹⁹ How then can this be reconciled with the persuasive empirical evidence marshalled by ethnoculturalists in support of the significance of religion and nationality in voting? My answer is that simply because a nationality group votes for a particular party's candidates, this is inconclusive proof that cultural imperatives were necessarily operating. Here is where ethnoculturalists seem to fall into a fundamental error. They assume that in classifying a person's nationality they are dealing with an ethnocultural as opposed to a socioeconomic attribute. But nationality is a broad concept that consists of several component values and attitudes--some cultural and some economic--and it is a mistake to separate them as though their influence was completely independent of one another. As indicated in Chapter II, rural Norwegian immigrants carried within themselves many remembered class and religious antagonisms that reinforced one another in the Old Country, but each of

which, upon emigration, lived on or gradually perished according to what was activating American politics at the time of settlement. One simply cannot easily distinguish whether members of a nationality group voted together because of their clannish regard for the candidate, their shared Protestantism, their remembered agrarian class animosities, or for all of these and other reasons. What I am suggesting is that ethnoculturalists ignore socioeconomic attitudes associated with nationality groups, failing to acknowledge that supposed culturally based correlates of nationality with votes may well be richly infused with socioeconomic content.

This feature of nationality has not gone entirely unrecognized. Michael Paul Rogin, for example, in his search for sources of McCarthyism, scrutinized Populist voting patterns in North Dakota. And in asking what led a nationality group such as the Scandinavians to support Populism while another such as the Russian-Germans resisted the movement, he concludes that "an ethnic tradition" seems to have "predisposed Scandinavians to support agrarian radical movements and fostered their "concern with economic demands." Russian-German communities, on the other hand, being tightly-knit, "fearful of alien influence, rigid and tradition-bound," manifested a "refusal to support economic change" and proved "resistant to class appeals."²⁰

The other powerful feature of voting behavior all too often ignored is that the determinants of political choice can be understood only in terms of the situation from which they sprung. A social analysis of politics, Samuel P. Hays emphasizes, demands focus on particular group "situations" in society. The question always to be asked, he reminds us, is "what particular people, at what particular time, in what particular place thought and acted in what particular way?"²¹ But while ethnoculturalists would undoubtedly agree with Hay's admonition to adopt a "situational perspective," the impression all too often gained from their work is of a group's same static ethnic and religious influences predominating in election after election, uncircumscribed by altered settings or political circumstance. Norwegian-American settlements, we have seen, responded differently to varied settings in time and place. Of course, although an attitude, once politicized, tended to persist in party attachments, new situations ultimately either shattered its political force or gradually submerged it beneath new clusters of attitudes impelling succeeding generations of voters. A comprehensive picture of electoral change and its determinants will remain unfinished until we begin to treat values and attitudes distinctive to a group as being held not by all its members, but shared with varying intensity by elements

having different livelihoods, living in different regions and types of localities.

Given the dual socioeconomic-cultural qualities of nationality groups and the crucial role played by the situations in which they found themselves, an alternative to a strictly ethnocultural explanation seems more clear. Focus shifts from dichotomizing political influences into exclusive economic versus cultural categories and instead concentrates on the particular blend of their influence jointly operating at different political levels. Given this viewpoint, it seems apparent to me that party differences derived from the legacy of group economic-cultural identities converging with national, state and local political cultures. Expanding settlement and evolving economic networks, maladjustments in transportation, an era of single party dominance, restive farmers, good harvests, an influential editor, a dynamic leader-- these and a multitude of other long-term, intermediate and short-term influences combined at each level to shape distinctive combinations of party allegiance.

Overall, differences of religion, nationality and economic condition set boundaries for political action, but they were of a kind within which a remarkable amount of variation occurred. If my findings concerning Norwegian-American politics have broader meaning, they

suggest that American electoral politics had truly been caught in endless cultural conflict, but so too had voters' group predispositions been endlessly neutralized by the crosscurrents of other issues, their immediate political cultures, and by the qualities of men that events lifted to leadership.

NOTES

- ¹Fergus Falls (Minn.) Globe, Mar. 26, 1904.
- ²Allan G. Bogue, Jerome M. Clubb, and William H. Flanigan, "The New Political History," American Behavioral Scientist, XXI (1977), 203.
- ³Even the general Republican thrust of Norwegian American allegiances was not uniform. In the state of Montana, for example, we are told that the Democratic party attracted many Norwegian-Americans. See Leola Nelson Bergmann, Americans from Norway (New York, 1950), p. 109.
- ⁴Samuel P. Huntington, "Paradigms of American Politics: Beyond the One, the Two, and the Many," Political Science Quarterly, LXXXIX (1974), 22-26.
- ⁵Daniel J. Elazar, The Generational Rhythm of American Politics (Philadelphia, 1976).
- ⁶Fergus Falls Globe, June 11, 1898.
- ⁷Paul Kleppner, The Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics, 1850-1900 (New York, 1970), pp. 84-88.
- ⁸Ibid., p. 73.
- ⁹See Walter Dean Burnham, "Quantitative History: Beyond the Correlation Coefficient, A Review Essay," Historical Methods Newsletter, IV (March, 1971), 63; Gerald M. Pomper, "From Confusion to Clarity: Issues and American Voters, 1956-1968," American Political Science Review, LXVI (1972), 415-428.
- ¹⁰That issues relate more closely to electoral decisions than earlier believed is brought out in Pomper, "From Confusion to Clarity," 415-428; David E. RePass, "Issue Salience and Party Choice," American Political Science Review, LXV (1971), 389-400; V. O. Key, Jr., The Responsible Electorate: Rationality in

Presidential Voting, 1936-1960 (Cambridge, Mass., 1966).

¹¹Fergus Falls Globe, Nov. 5, 1904.

¹²Interview with Harald Boen, Wadena, Minn., Sept. 4, 1970; Fergus Falls Globe, Oct. 10, 31, 1896.

¹³Chicago (Ill.) Skandinaven quoted in Minneapolis North, Sept. 14, 28, 1892.

¹⁴See also James E. Wright, "The Ethnocultural Model of Voting: A Behavioral and Historical Critique," American Behavioral Scientist, XVI (1973), 664-667.

¹⁵Paul Kleppner, "Immigrant Groups and Partisan Politics," Immigration History Newsletter, X (1978), 3; Samuel P. Hays, "Modernizing Values in the History of the United States," Peasant Studies, VI (1977), 70.

¹⁶See Chester A. Arthur Destler, American Radicalism, 1865-1901 (New London, Conn., 1946), chap. i.

¹⁷On the claim that Norwegian-American behavior reflected the dream of a co-operative order, see Jon Wefald, A Voice of Protest: Norwegians in American Politics, 1890-1917 (Northfield, Minn., 1971).

¹⁸Richard Jensen, The Winning of the Midwest: Social and Political Conflict, 1888-1896 (Chicago, 1971), p. xiii.

¹⁹Samuel P. Hays, "History as Human Behavior," Iowa Journal of History, LVIII (1960), 195-197.

²⁰Michael Paul Rogin, The Intellectuals and McCarthy: The Radical Specter (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), pp. 118-119. The class components of cultural divisions are brought out in James R. Green, "Behavioralism and Class Analysis: A Review Essay on Methodology and Ideology," Labor History, XIII (1972), 96-98.

²¹Samuel P. Hays, "New Possibilities for American Political History: The Social Analysis of Political Life," Sociology and History: Methods, ed. Seymour Martin Lipset and Richard Hofstadter (New York, 1968), pp. 197-202. See also his "A Systematic Social History," American History: Retrospect and Prospect, ed. George Athan Billias and Gerald N. Grob (New York, 1971),

pp. 326-328; and Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis (New York, 1969), chaps. ii, iii.

APPENDIX A
DESCRIPTION OF METHOD

Since all investigations proceed on the basis of certain assumptions that guide the selection of facts and their presentation, it is appropriate that I address prominent features of my research approach. A central aim of my investigation was to identify Norwegian-American voting patterns in diverse settings to discover the central tendencies, range of variation, and possible sources of differences expressed.

Selection of settlements for study

I selected 189 predominantly Norwegian minor civil divisions from among rural settlements of Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota to serve as indicators of rural Norwegian political patterns. Of them, Wisconsin provided 48, Iowa 32, and Minnesota 109. This distribution roughly approximates the proportion of Norwegian-American citizens found within each state in 1910, according to population figures published in Volume I of the Thirteenth United States Census. Take Minnesota, for example. This state contained 58 percent of the total population of Norwegian

origin in the three states, and 57 percent of the 189 political units were selected from this state. Wisconsin was slightly under-represented (25 percent of the political units and 31 percent of the three-state Norwegian-American population), while Iowa was slightly over-represented (17 percent of the political units compared to 13 percent of the population).

As to what constituted a "predominantly Norwegian" settlement, I concerned myself with small rural political units (i.e., townships and incorporated towns and villages) that contained 50 percent or more potential Norwegian-American voters, according to manuscript schedules of the 1880 United States Census. A township's "Norwegian voters" I defined as every male age twenty-one or older whose father or himself had been born in Norway. Wisconsin provided the only exception. Based on the 1905 state census, I counted an adult "family head" as a potential Norwegian voter if he or either of his parents were born in Norway.

I also verified the continued homogeneous character of these selected voting units in the manuscript schedules of both the 1895 state census of Iowa and in the 1905 state censuses of Minnesota and Wisconsin. For Wisconsin, I drew information about the ethnic character of voting units mainly from "Cultural-Ethnic Backgrounds

in Wisconsin: A Retabulation of Population Schedules from the Wisconsin State Census of 1905." This is an unbound typescript prepared in the 1930's by the Departments of Rural Sociology and Agricultural Economics at the University of Wisconsin and is on file at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison.

I also included among the 189 selected voting units a few Norwegian precincts that were either formed after 1880 (such as in northwestern Minnesota) or later reached 50 percent or more of the locality's population according to when, by inter-census interpolation, I estimated that they met the aforementioned conditions.

A final consideration involved making sure that the boundaries of a political unit in 1880 remained constant throughout the period under study. In some cases this required combining together certain township, town and village units in order to achieve the necessary comparability over time. For these purposes, I relied on boundary changes identified in footnotes of population tables for minor civil divisions published in volumes of the United States Census, 1880-1930.

Votes examined

The study is based on ballots cast for candidates for governor and president in general elections between 1880 and 1924. With but a couple exceptions, time limits did

not permit me to consider the results of primary elections. I recognize that the impact of Republican factionalism often worked itself out in these contests, but I chose to sacrifice this in the interests of expanding the number of years being considered in the study. Most voting returns I derived from the Wisconsin Blue Book, Minnesota Legislative Manual, and Iowa Official Register.

Minnesota's precinct votes for president, however, came from unbound returns on file at the Minnesota State Historical Society. I turned to local county newspapers for precinct returns of most races other than for governor and president, and for any that could not be found in the biennial volumes published by each state.

Procedure used to estimate voter turnout

My base line data at the precinct level came from the federal manuscript census schedules of 1880, the Iowa state census of 1895, the Minnesota and Wisconsin state censuses of 1905, and from 1930 population figures published in the Fifteenth United States Census. The job of estimating the number of potential voters in Iowa's precincts (i.e., people age 21 or older) proved quite easy. Several published decennial state censuses in Iowa through 1925 identified the number of males by age, which made reliable inter-census estimates possible.

Estimates for Minnesota and Wisconsin constituted another story, however. Since fully twenty-five years separated the 1905 precinct-level information in the two states from the 1930 federal census information, I devised another method for estimating potential voters there. Published federal censuses of 1910 and 1920 provided county-level figures on the age of citizens. I computed the percentage of the potential voters in the total county's population for 1910 and 1920 and determined the difference between the two percentages. By interpolation, I converted that result to an average number of annual percentage point changes in potential voters between the two years. I then took each estimated annual percentage of a county's potential voters and multiplied it by the estimated total population of each of its precincts. This yielded annual estimates of potential voters within each precinct.

The method seems to work, at least for rural counties. When I checked the estimates computed by this method against my own known counts from the 1905 state manuscript censuses, I found that those derived from county level percentages did not vary from my own precinct level counts by more than 3.5 percentage points, with the average variation being only 2.0 percent.

In spite of apparently adequate procedures for making estimates, between-state comparisons of voter turnout rates proved impossible. This is because Iowa's state censuses were plagued by constant under-reporting of population. Unlike Minnesota and Wisconsin, which mounted separate organizations especially to conduct their census, Iowa merely thrust this additional burden onto the workload of the township assessor and county auditor. Consequently, less attentive coverage resulted and this showed in my computations, which yielded consistently high levels of voter turnout--sometimes exceeding 100 percent. For this reason, throughout my study voter turnout levels in Norwegian-American townships have been compared only to that given by other political units within each state.

Estimating synod predominance of
Norwegian Lutheran membership
in a political unit

Here I relied on information gathered by Olaf Morgan Norlie and published in his Norsk Lutherske Menigheter i America 1843-1916 (Minneapolis, 1918). I based my estimates on the way things looked as of 1892. It is difficult to be precise about the synod affiliations of Norwegian Lutheran residents of a township, town or village. This is because Norlie's information is given by congregation, not township. In lieu of the impossibly time-consuming task of determining for 189 voting units

whether or not members of a congregation lived in one township or nearby in another, certain assumptions had to be made. Mainly, in the absence of information to the contrary, I assumed that the residences of church members clustered in a circular pattern around each congregation that Norlie had identified on maps. To the extent that the membership appeared to spill beyond the borders of the political unit in question, I assigned a percentage of it to the adjoining township(s). After doing this for all Norwegian congregations either within or nearby the political unit, I combined together all estimated members living within the precinct. Then I computed which percentage of this total was associated with each synod.

I used these percentages for calculating partial and multiple correlations and performing regression analyses. For purposes of classifying units according to their predominant synod affiliation (that is, Hauge's Synod, United Lutheran Church and Lutheran Free Church, mixed Norwegian Synod and pietist congregations, or Norwegian Synod), I assigned each to a class based on whether 50 percent or more of the estimated membership aligned themselves with one or another synod.

Additional comments on the selection
of settlement characteristics

In nearly all cases I have selected a cultural, social or economic indicator at one point during the period and measured its relationship to the votes throughout the period under study. The major precaution taken was to select attributes for Norwegian townships that held nearly constant their relative position from one township to another over the years. I included, for example, percent farm acreage in corn because the Norwegian-American townships that produced low amounts of corn in the 1880's were also those situated at the low end of corn production in the 1920's. The following is a list of the independent variables considered in the study. I have noted, where applicable, the state and year of the information derived, if I found it available for only one or two of the states.

1. Percent adult Norwegian males.
2. Estimated Norwegian Lutheran church predominance.
3. Estimated average years of population residence as of 1895.
4. Predominant region of origin in Norway (east Norway, mixed east and west Norway, and west Norway).
5. Percent farm renters (Minn., 1922; Wisc., 1905).
6. Average value per acre (Minn., 1899; Wisc., 1905).
7. Percent improved acreage per farm (Minn., 1922; Wisc., 1905).

8. Average value of rural personal property (Minn., 1905; Wisc., 1900-1905).
9. Coefficients of Variability in value of rural personal property (Minn., 1905; Wisc., 1900-1905).
10. Percent crop acreage in wheat (Minn., 1922; Wisc., 1905; Iowa, 1895).
11. Percent crop acreage in corn (Minn., 1922; Wisc., 1905; Iowa, 1895).
12. Percent crop acreage in minor grains (Buckwheat, Rye, Barley) (Minn., 1922; Wisc., 1905; Iowa, 1895).
13. Percent crop acreage in hay (Minn., 1922; Wisc., 1905; Iowa, 1895).
14. Percent crop acreage in oats (Minn., 1922; Wisc., 1905; Iowa, 1895).
15. Percent crop acreage in other crops (Minn., 1922; Wisc., 1905; Iowa, 1895).
16. Percent urban population (that is, in incorporated towns, villages and cities as of 1910).
17. Relative peripherality of minor civil unit (an index based on combining three variables: value per acre, percent urban population, distance to county seat) for Minnesota and Wisconsin only.
18. Percent turnover of potential voters, 1895-1905 (Minn.).
19. Distance to county seat (measured from center of township).
20. Region of location within the state.
 - a. Southeast Minnesota (Fillmore, Houston, Goodhue, Dodge, Freeborn, Faribault counties).
 - b. West-central Minnesota (Meeker, Kandiyohi, Chippewa, Swift counties).

- c. Northwestern Minnesota (Otter Tail, Wilkin, Becker, Clay, Norman, Polk, Clearwater counties).
- d. Central Wisconsin (Dane, Green, Iowa, Waupaca, Washara, Portage, Adams counties).
- e. Southwest Wisconsin (Vernon, Crawford, Monroe counties).
- f. Western Wisconsin (Trempealeau, Jackson, Buffalo, LaCrosse counties).
- g. Northwest Wisconsin (Pierce, St. Croix, Dunn, Shawano counties).
- h. Northeast Iowa (Winnesheik, Fayette, Clayton, Mitchell, Worth counties).
- i. Central Iowa (Story, Harrison, Hardin counties).
- j. North-central Iowa (Winnebago, Humboldt, Emmet counties).

APPENDIX B

LIST OF PREDOMINANTLY NORWEGIAN SETTLEMENTS

Table 9

List of Predominantly Norwegian Minor Civil Divisions
Examined in This Study
Including Prominent Characteristics of Each

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance ^a
Minnesota	Becker	Atlanta	75.4	0	4
Minnesota	Becker	Audubon Twp. & Vill.	70.2	30.7	1
Minnesota	Becker	Cuba	71.1	0	3
Minnesota	Becker	Hamden	63.5	0	1
Minnesota	Becker	Walworth	65.1	0	4
Minnesota	Chippewa	Big Bend	89.1	0	4
Minnesota	Chippewa	Kragero Twp. & Milan Vill.	81.6	42.4	2

^a1=Hauge's Synod; 2=United Lutheran Church and Lutheran Free Church; 3=Mixed Norwegian Synod and pietist congregations; 4=Norwegian Synod. Refer to Appendix A for discussion of how classifications were devised.

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance
Minnesota	Chippewa	Mandt	89.4	0	2
Minnesota	Chippewa	Tunsberg Twp. & Watson Vill.	79.1	21.0	3
Minnesota	Clay	Goose Prairie & Hitterdal Vill.	66.7	24.9	2
Minnesota	Clay	Hagen	69.0	0	2
Minnesota	Clay	Holy Cross	66.0	0	2
Minnesota	Clay	Keene	69.0	0	4
Minnesota	Clay	Morken	70.8	0	2
Minnesota	Clay	Parke	84.7	0	2
Minnesota	Clay	Skree	83.0	0	2
Minnesota	Clay	Tansem	100.0	0	4
Minnesota	Clay	Ulem Twp. & Vill.	74.5	52.8	2
Minnesota	Clearwater	Greenwood	73.7	0	2

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance
Minnesota	Clearwater	Hangaard	86.4	0	0
Minnesota	Clearwater	Nora	76.1	0	2
Minnesota	Clearwater	Windsor	73.9	0	2
Minnesota	Dodge	Vernon	91.7	0	4
Minnesota	Dodge	Westfield	58.0	0	2
Minnesota	Faribault	Brush Creek	67.5	0	4
Minnesota	Faribault	Emerald	65.7	0	1
Minnesota	Faribault	Rome Twp. & Frost Vill.	76.7	16.7	3
Minnesota	Faribault	Seely Twp. & Brialyn Vill.	62.4	33.9	4
Minnesota	Fillmore	Amherst	70.7	0	3
Minnesota	Fillmore	Arendahl	96.2	0	2
Minnesota	Fillmore	Beaver	52.2	0	1

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance
Minnesota	Fillmore	Newburg Twp. & Vill. & Mabel Vill.	66.5	40.4	2
Minnesota	Fillmore	Norway	96.7	0	4
Minnesota	Fillmore	Pilot Mound	74.0	0	2
Minnesota	Fillmore	Preble	87.2	0	2
Minnesota	Fillmore	Rushford Vill. & Peterson Vill.	82.5	26.9	2
Minnesota	Fillmore	Rushford City	62.3	100.0	2
Minnesota	Freeborn	Hartland Twp. & Vill.	68.7	26.2	4
Minnesota	Freeborn	Hayward Twp. & Vill.	61.5	0	4
Minnesota	Freeborn	Riceland	73.1	0	4
Minnesota	Goodhue	Cherry Grove	61.2	0	2
Minnesota	Goodhue	Holden	78.5	0	2
Minnesota	Goodhue	Kenyon Twp. & Vill.	65.5	62.4	2

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance
Minnesota	Goodhue	Menneola	71.2	0	2
Minnesota	Goodhue	Roscoe	69.4	0	1
Minnesota	Goodhue	Wannamingo Twp. & Vill.	89.3	23.0	2
Minnesota	Goodhue	Warsaw Twp. & Dennison Vill.	73.8	16.7	2
Minnesota	Houston	Black Hammer	83.6	0	4
Minnesota	Houston	Spring Grove Twp. & Vill.	89.5	40.4	4
Minnesota	Houston	Yucatan	74.0	0	3
Minnesota	Kandiyohi	Arctander	85.9	0	2
Minnesota	Kandiyohi	Dovre	68.6	0	2
Minnesota	Kandiyohi	Irving	70.9	0	2
Minnesota	Kandiyohi	Norway Lake	95.4	0	2
Minnesota	Meeker	Acton Twp. & Grove City	57.2	0	3

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance
Minnesota	Norman	Anthony	77.3	0	2
Minnesota	Norman	Bear Park	82.2	0	2
Minnesota	Norman	Flom	92.9	0	4
Minnesota	Norman	Fossum	86.1	0	4
Minnesota	Norman	Good Hope	56.1	0	2
Minnesota	Norman	Halstad Twp. & Vill.	90.5	44.4	2
Minnesota	Norman	Hegne	88.4	0	2
Minnesota	Norman	Hendrum Twp. & Vill.	82.3	32.5	2
Minnesota	Norman	Home Lake	89.1	0	4
Minnesota	Norman	Lee Twp. & Perley Vill.	86.3	25.3	2
Minnesota	Norman	Rockwell	68.9	0	3
Minnesota	Norman	Strand Twp. & Gary Vill.	86.8	46.9	4

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance
Minnesota	Norman	Sundal	74.8	0	2
Minnesota	Norman	Shelly Twp. & Vill.	89.5	16.8	2
Minnesota	Norman	Waukon	93.6	0	3
Minnesota	Norman	Wild Rice Twp. & Twin Valley Village	74.7	54.8	2
Minnesota	Otter Tail	Aastad	81.4	0	2
Minnesota	Otter Tail	Aurdal	71.1	0	3
Minnesota	Otter Tail	Dane Prairie	72.9	0	1
Minnesota	Otter Tail	Everts Twp. & Battle Lake Vill.	55.8	61.2	2
Minnesota	Otter Tail	Folden	82.1	0	2
Minnesota	Otter Tail	Nidaros Twp. & Vill. Clitterall & Vining Vill.	67.8	44.7	2
Minnesota	Otter Tail	Norwegian Grove	93.8	0	3

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance
Minnesota	Otter Tail	Oscar	77.0	0	4
Minnesota	Otter Tail	St. Olaf	84.7	0	3
Minnesota	Otter Tail	Sverdrup Twp. & Underwood Vill.	82.0	17.0	2
Minnesota	Otter Tail	Tordenskjold	55.0	0	2
Minnesota	Otter Tail	Trondhjem	96.4	0	4
Minnesota	Otter Tail	Tumuli Twp. & Dalton Vill.	82.7	26.8	1
Minnesota	Polk	Badger	81.4	0	2
Minnesota	Polk	Brandsvold	85.1	0	3
Minnesota	Polk	Bygland	77.8	0	4
Minnesota	Polk	Chester	82.8	0	4
Minnesota	Polk	Eden	67.3	0	4
Minnesota	Polk	Garden	84.0	0	2

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance
Minnesota	Polk	Garfield Twp. & Fertile Vill.	66.4	48.1	2
Minnesota	Polk	Godfrey	77.7	0	2
Minnesota	Polk	Gully	73.7	0	4
Minnesota	Polk	Helgeland	75.0	0	3
Minnesota	Polk	Hubbard Twp. & Nielsville Vill.	89.0	0	2
Minnesota	Polk	Johnson	84.2	0	2
Minnesota	Polk	Knute Twp. & Erskine Vill.	66.2	33.1	2
Minnesota	Polk	Lessor	81.6	0	2
Minnesota	Polk	Queen	76.1	0	4
Minnesota	Polk	Sletten	83.4	0	3
Minnesota	Polk	Tynsid	65.2	0	2

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance
Minnesota	Polk	Vineland Twp. & Climax Vill.	85.3	35.0	2
Minnesota	Polk	Winger Twp. & Vill.	76.1	0	2
Minnesota	Polk	Woodside	68.1	0	2
Minnesota	Swift	Camp Lake	71.3	0	4
Minnesota	Swift	Kerkhoven Twp.	82.1	0	4
Minnesota	Swift	Torning Twp. minus Benson Vill.	49.6	0	3
Minnesota	Swift	West Bank	75.9	0	2
Minnesota	Wilkin	Tanberg Twp. & Rothsay Vill.	86.1	55.3	4
Wisconsin	Adams	Strong Prairie & Arkdale Vill.	65.6	0	2
Wisconsin	Buffalo	Modena	65.4	0	2
Wisconsin	Buffalo	Dover Twp.	66.0	0	4

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance
Wisconsin	Crawford	Utica Twp. & Mt. Sterling Vill.	52.4	0	3
Wisconsin	Crawford	Freeman Twp. & Ferry- ville Vill. & part of DeSota Vill.	62.9	18.9	2
Wisconsin	Dane	Blue Mounds Twp. & Vill. & Mt. Horeb Vill.	60.6	52.6	2
Wisconsin	Dane	Christiana Twp. & Cambridge Vill. & Rockdale Vill.	75.6	24.7	3
Wisconsin	Dane	Dunn Twp. & McFarland Vill.	53.9	20.0	4
Wisconsin	Dane	Deerfield Twp. & Vill.	94.4	35.0	2
Wisconsin	Dane	Perry	74.1	0	2
Wisconsin	Dane	Pleasant Springs	84.4	0	3
Wisconsin	Dane	Primrose	58.6	0	1

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance
Wisconsin	Dane	Stoughton City or Vill.	68.6	100.0	3
Wisconsin	Dunn	Colfax Twp. & Vill.	64.0	48.9	3
Wisconsin	Dunn	Elk Mound Twp. & Vill.	50.5	31.6	4
Wisconsin	Dunn	Grant	66.9	0	4
Wisconsin	Dunn	Sand Creek	70.6	0	3
Wisconsin	Green	York Twp. & Postville Vill.	68.4	0	2
Wisconsin	Iowa	Moscow Twp. & Hollan- dale Vill.	53.4	20.6	2
Wisconsin	Jackson	Curran	76.3	0	3
Wisconsin	Jackson	Garfield Twp. & Northfield Twp.	75.4	0	4
Wisconsin	Jackson	Franklin	83.8	0	4
Wisconsin	Jackson	Springfield Twp. & Taylor Vill.	74.6	0	1

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance
Wisconsin	LaCrosse	Holland Twp. & Holmen Vill.	57.6	0	4
Wisconsin	Monroe	Portland	70.9	0	3
Wisconsin	Pierce	Gilman	67.5	0	4
Wisconsin	Pierce	Martell	81.4	0	2
Wisconsin	Portage	New Hope	71.4	0	2
Wisconsin	St. Croix	Eau Galle	82.8	0	4
Wisconsin	St. Croix	Pleasant Valley	55.1	0	4
Wisconsin	St. Croix	Rush River	70.1	0	4
Wisconsin	Shawano	Navarino	68.2	0	2
Wisconsin	Trempealeau	Albion Twp. & Eleva Vill.	51.3	28.9	2
Wisconsin	Trempealeau	Chimney Rock	82.6	0	2
Wisconsin	Trempealeau	Ettrick Twp. & Vill.	81.1	0	4

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance
Wisconsin	Trempealeau	Hale	68.2	0	4
Wisconsin	Trempealeau	Pigeon	88.3	0	2
Wisconsin	Trempealeau	Preston Twp. & Blair Vill.	83.6	0	3
Wisconsin	Trempealeau	Unity & Strum	85.4	0	3
Wisconsin	Vernon	Christiana Twp. & Westby Vill.	92.5	40.6	3
Wisconsin	Vernon	Coon Twp. & Coon Valley Vill.	94.9	19.7	2
Wisconsin	Vernon	Franklin	60.4	0	3
Wisconsin	Vernon	Jefferson Twp. & Springville Vill.	63.3	0	3
Wisconsin	Vernon	Sterling	78.9	0	4
Wisconsin	Vernon	Viroqua Twp. minus Viroqua Vill.	57.2	0	4

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance
Wisconsin	Waupaca	Iola Twp. & Vill. & Harrison Twp.	73.8	36.6	2
Wisconsin	Waupaca	Scandinavia Twp. & Vill.	85.8	27.8	2
Wisconsin	Waushara	Mount Morris	52.1	0	2
Iowa	Clayton	Marion	67.5	0	2
Iowa	Emmet	High Lake & Walingford Vill.	68.5	0	2
Iowa	Fayette	Dover Twp.	50.4	0	1
Iowa	Hamilton	Ellsworth	68.9	0	3
Iowa	Hamilton	Lincoln Twp. & Ellsworth Vill.	53.1	29.9	2
Iowa	Hamilton	Scott	88.8	0	1
Iowa	Hardin	Concord	70.9	0	1
Iowa	Humboldt	Delana Twp. & Bode Vill.	57.0	40.7	4

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance
Iowa	Humboldt	Lake Twp. & Hardy Vill.	50.9	0	2
Iowa	Humboldt	Norway Twp. & Thor Vill.	88.5	28.4	3
Iowa	Mitchell	Otranto	56.0	0	2
Iowa	Story	Howard Twp. & Roland Vill.	81.2	45.9	1
Iowa	Story	LaFayette Twp. & Story City	50.1	69.6	3
Iowa	Story	Palestine Twp. & Slater Vill. & Sheldahl Vill. & Huxley Vill. & Kelly Vill.	71.6	53.7	2
Iowa	Winnebago	Eden	78.0	0	4
Iowa	Winnebago	Logan Twp. & part of Scarville	82.0	16.3	3
Iowa	Winnebago	Linden	57.0	0	2

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance
Iowa	Winnebago	Lincoln Twp. & Rake Vill.	85.8	25.6	3
Iowa	Winnebago	Mount Valley	82.6	0	2
Iowa	Winnebago	Newton	65.0	0	2
Iowa	Winnebago	Center Twp. & Lake Mills Vill.	65.5	65.9	2
Iowa	Winnesheik	Glenwood	81.0	0	4
Iowa	Winnesheik	Highland	88.7	0	4
Iowa	Winnesheik	Madison	74.4	0	4
Iowa	Winnesheik	Pleasant	71.2	0	4
Iowa	Winnesheik	Springfield	82.7	0	2
Iowa	Worth	Bristol Twp. & Joice Vill.	66.7	0	3
Iowa	Worth	Brookfield	94.0	0	2

Table 9 (Cont'd.)

State	County	Township	Percent Norwegian Adult Males	Percent 1910 Town-Village Population	Estimated Norwegian Church Synod Predominance
Iowa	Worth	Fertile Twp. & Vill. & part of Hanlontown	63.4	29.7	2
Iowa	Worth	Hartland	81.7	0	2
Iowa	Worth	Kensett Twp. & Vill.	51.1	40.9	2
Iowa	Worth	Silver Lake	88.8	0	3

APPENDIX C

SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES OF CORRELATES BETWEEN SELECTED SETTLEMENT
CHARACTERISTICS AND THEIR VOTES, BY STATE

Table 10

Voting patterns in Norwegian settlements of Wisconsin, Iowa and
Minnesota, 1880-1924: Coefficients of Multiple and Partial
Correlation between each of six characteristics about the
settlements and percent Republican vote for president

Attributes	1880	1884	1888	1892	1896	1900	1904	1908	1912	1916	1920	1924
<u>WISCONSIN:</u>												
Time of settlement	.19	.18	.11	-.35	-.10	.10	.04	.25	-.03	.10	-.20	.34
Pct. Norse voters	.20	.13	.10	-.08	-.01	.11	.16	.23	.27	.03	.02	-.05
Norwegian Synod pct.	-.20	-.23	-.12	-.26	-.18	-.10	-.03	-.14	-.07	-.22	.23	.15
Pct. urban population	-.10	.07	.18	.07	.13	.13	.03	-.01	.02	.04	.10	.40
Wheat: pct. crop acres	.15	.05	.15	.31	.24	.20	.21	.35	.36	.16	.41	.07
Corn: pct. crop acres	-.03	.13	.05	-.28	-.21	-.11	-.18	-.13	.01	-.05	-.05	.17
Multiple R	.40	.28	.27	.57	.43	.40	.47	.63	.49	.33	.48	.53
R Square	.16	.08	.07	.33	.18	.16	.23	.40	.24	.11	.23	.28
No. of cases	(32)	(33)	(34)	(38)	(38)	(40)	(40)	(40)	(40)	(40)	(40)	(40)

Table 10 (Cont'd.)

Attributes	1880	1884	1888	1892	1896	1900	1904	1908	1912	1916	1920	1924
<u>IOWA:</u> ^a												
Time of settlement	--	--	.44	-.27	-.19	.12	-.07	.13	.26	.03	.45	.06
Pct. Norse voters	--	--	.68	.47	.46	.73	.65	.64	-.10	.53	.76	-.04
Norwegian Synod pct.	--	--	-.11	-.43	-.33	-.48	-.27	.02	-.07	-.21	.37	-.02
Pct. urban population	--	--	.26	.22	-.09	-.12	.20	-.09	.27	.17	-.45	.01
Wheat: pct. crop acres	--	--	.12	-.33	-.32	-.36	-.01	.01	-.09	-.35	-.32	-.06
Corn: pct. crop acres	--	--	.20	.23	.06	.27	.20	.38	-.21	.25	.31	.33
Multiple R	--	--	.74	.73	.66	.81	.67	.72	.45	.68	.83	.42
R Square	--	--	.55	.54	.43	.65	.45	.52	.20	.46	.70	.18
No. of cases	(--)	(--)	(20)	(22)	(25)	(25)	(25)	(24)	(25)	(25)	(8)	(25)

^a1880 and 1884--Insufficient cases made multiple and partial correlations impossible.

Table 10 (Cont'd.)

Attributes	1880	1884	1888	1892	1896	1900	1904	1908	1912	1916	1920	1924
<u>MINNESOTA:</u>												
Time of settlement	.30	-.02	.04	-.36	-.27	-.13	-.11	-.14	-.25	-.29	-.24	-.48
Pct. Norse voters	.57	.36	.10	-.01	-.02	.07	.11	.18	-.03	-.01	-.10	-.04
Norwegian Synod pct.	.13	-.08	.05	.12	-.01	.07	.03	-.06	.09	.11	.07	.17
Pct. urban population	.15	.13	-.17	.12	.05	-.01	.09	.07	.16	.11	.16	.43
Wheat: pct. crop acres	.06	-.13	-.33	-.06	-.11	-.35	-.29	-.54	-.16	-.38	-.33	-.14
Corn: pct. crop acres	.28	-.08	.02	.13	.20	.18	.04	.10	-.04	.06	-.11	-.23
Multiple R	.68	.40	.41	.66	.63	.62	.42	.66	.45	.65	.50	.67
R Square	.46	.16	.17	.43	.40	.38	.18	.44	.20	.42	.25	.45
No. of cases	(48)	(39)	(91)	(94)	(94)	(95)	(99)	(100)	(100)	(99)	(99)	(99)

Table 11

Voting Patterns in Norwegian Settlements in Wisconsin, 1880-1924:
Coefficients of Multiple and Partial Correlation between Each
of Five Characteristics Selected from the State Census of 1905
and Percent Vote Cast for Republican Candidates for Governor

Characteristics	1881	1884	1886	1888	1890	1892	1894	1896	1898	1900	1902
Average Value Per Acre	-.12	.16	.18	-.02	-.13	.06	.08	.03	-.20	-.01	-.07
Percent Farm Renters	-.20	-.33	-.22	-.08	-.04	-.02	-.07	-.16	-.02	-.17	-.36
Average Value Per Farm	.22	-.02	-.06	.02	.10	.02	-.09	-.10	.02	-.11	-.12
Harvested Crops Value/Farm	-.27	-.25	-.15	-.14	.09	-.22	-.14	-.04	-.06	.04	-.05
Potatoes: Percent value of Total Harvested Crops	.26	.39	.36	.36	.43	.26	.38	.36	-.11	.30	.23
	Multiple Correlation With:										
Mult. Corr. Coefficient R	.51	.57	.45	.46	.50	.35	.49	.53	.46	.53	.72
Coef. of Determination R ²	.26	.36	.20	.21	.25	.12	.24	.28	.21	.28	.53
Number of Cases	(28)	(29)	(30)	(30)	(34)	(34)	(35)	(35)	(35)	(36)	(36)

Table 11 (Cont'd.)

Characteristics	1904	1906	1908	1910	1912	1914	1916	1918	1920	1922	1924
Average Value Per Acre	.03	-.07	-.28	-.13	-.17	-.30	-.52	-.23	-.20	.09	-.13
Percent Farm Renters	-.36	-.24	-.05	-.26	-.12	-.05	.04	-.19	-.03	-.11	-.31
Average Value Per Farm	-.19	-.04	.02	.06	.07	.27	.33	.07	.10	.04	.09
Harvested Crops Value/Farm	-.05	.04	-.23	-.08	-.24	-.29	-.21	.19	.07	-.10	-.01
Potatoes: Percent value of Total Harvested Crops	.33	.29	.20	.26	.16	.08	.06	-.18	-.47	.00	-.52
Multiple Correlation With:											
Mult. Corr. Coefficient R	.71	.56	.72	.60	.58	.52	.69	.47	.48	.19	.59
Coef. of Determination R ²	.51	.32	.52	.36	.34	.27	.48	.22	.23	.04	.35
Number of Cases	(36)	(36)	(36)	(36)	(36)	(36)	(36)	(36)	(36)	(36)	(36)

Table 12

Voting Patterns in Norwegian Settlements in Iowa, 1881-1924:
Coefficients of Multiple and Partial Correlation between Each
of Five Characteristics Selected from the 1895 State Census
and Percent Vote Cast for Republican Candidates for Governor

Characteristics	1881	1883	1885	1887	1889	1891	1893	1895	1897	1899	1901
Percent Norwegian Voters	.42	.43	.30	.11	.25	.26	.33	.38	.51	.60	.60
Estimated Settlement Time	.09	.84	.06	-.05	.17	.03	-.11	-.14	-.35	-.13	.24
Wheat--Percent crop acres	.27	.53	-.12	-.18	-.42	-.42	-.38	-.46	-.38	-.36	-.46
Percent Urban Population	.09	-.69	-.08	.09	.08	.14	.07	.02	-.17	-.06	-.36
Estimated Percent Norwegian Synod members	.13	-.87	-.01	-.25	-.21	-.39	-.30	-.40	-.37	-.42	-.61
Multiple Correlation With:											
Mult. Corr. Coefficient R	.48	.95	.40	.32	.52	.60	.58	.66	.73	.71	.79
Coef. of Determination R ²	.23	.92	.16	.10	.27	.36	.33	.44	.53	.50	.62
Number of cases	(18)	(2)	(19)	(21)	(23)	(23)	(24)	(26)	(26)	(26)	(26)

Table 12 (Cont'd.)

Characteristics	1903	1906	1908	1910	1912	1914	1916	1918	1920	1922	1924
Percent Norwegian Voters	.55	.49	.54	.46	.29	.09	.25	-.11	.34	.31	.45
Estimated Settlement Time	.33	.41	.40	-.05	-.02	-.36	-.04	.21	.36	.49	.46
Wheat--Percent crop acres	-.08	-.00	-.24	-.14	-.23	.06	-.36	-.16	-.32	.04	-.16
Percent Urban Population	.12	-.31	.06	-.20	-.21	-.54	-.49	.15	.18	-.41	.05
Estimated Percent Norwegian Synod members	-.29	-.15	-.08	-.06	.18	.09	.29	-.05	.11	-.16	-.14
Multiple Correlation With:											
Mult. Corr. Coefficient R	.61	.67	.62	.56	.50	.66	.69	.34	.46	.67	.60
Coef. of Determination R ²	.38	.45	.38	.31	.25	.44	.48	.12	.21	.45	.36
Number of cases	(26)	(26)	(26)	(26)	(26)	(26)	(26)	(26)	(26)	(26)	(26)

Table 13

Voting Patterns in Norwegian Settlements in Minnesota, 1880-1924:
Coefficients of Multiple and Partial Correlation between Each
of Five Characteristics Selected from the State Population
Census of 1905, the Agricultural Census of 1922 and Percent
Vote Cast for Republican Candidates for Governor

Characteristics	1881	1883	1886	1888	1890	1892	1894	1896	1898	1900	1902
Estimated Settlement Time	.03	.02	-.31	-.02	.05	-.07	.11	.03	.03	.04	.15
Average Value Per Acre	-.39	-.03	-.23	-.02	.46	.39	.50	.48	.46	.47	.46
Percent Crop Acres--Corn	.11	-.01	-.05	.04	.24	.13	.20	-.03	-.02	.07	.00
Percent Crop Acres--Wheat	.14	-.04	-.27	-.27	-.22	-.18	-.26	-.20	-.27	-.32	-.33
Distance to County Seat	-.09	.19	.42	.13	-.15	-.20	-.20	-.19	-.11	-.07	-.16
Multiple Correlation With:											
Mult. Corr. Coefficient R	.65	.27	.62	.42	.80	.78	.80	.73	.73	.77	.70
Coef. of Determination R ²	.42	.07	.39	.18	.64	.61	.64	.54	.53	.60	.49
Number of cases	(50)	(66)	(89)	(90)	(91)	(92)	(93)	(93)	(93)	(93)	(93)

Table 13 (Cont'd.)

Characteristics	1904	1906	1908	1910	1912	1914	1916	1918	1920	1922	1924
Estimated Settlement Time	.02	-.02	-.11	.14	-.04	-.30	-.27	-.15	-.12	-.14	-.19
Average Value Per Acre	.29	.28	.19	.31	.12	-.02	.09	.20	.26	.31	.35
Percent Crop Acres--Corn	-.01	.04	.16	.09	-.29	-.18	-.03	-.13	-.19	-.18	-.25
Percent Crop Acres--Wheat	-.29	-.23	-.23	-.27	-.47	-.02	-.15	-.18	-.23	-.18	-.14
Distance to County Seat	-.13	-.14	.10	-.22	-.39	.05	.10	-.15	-.21	-.21	-.15
Multiple Correlation With:											
Mult. Corr. Coefficient R	.63	.65	.69	.61	.61	.43	.63	.58	.61	.65	.67
Coef. of Determination R ²	.39	.42	.47	.37	.37	.18	.40	.33	.37	.43	.45
Number of cases	(93)	(93)	(92)	(92)	(92)	(92)	(91)	(91)	(91)	(91)	(91)

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