NPS Form 10-900-b
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OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

X New Submission ___ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

The Norwegian Related Resources of Olive Township, Clinton County, Iowa

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Norwegian Settlement in Olive Township, 1853-1950

C. Form Prepared by

name/title David C. Anderson

organization _____ date _____

street & number 169 Lundy Bridge Drive telephone (319) 382-3079

city or town Waukon state Iowa zip code 52172

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Patricia Ohlerking DSHPO 7-11-00

Signature and title of certifying official Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 8/15/00

STATEMENT OF HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Introduction

The Norwegian settlement in Olive Township must be seen in the larger context of Norwegian immigration to the U.S. and to the Midwest in particular for a full understanding of its contribution "to the broad patterns of our history." While limited in its geographic scope, this rural agriculture-based settlement by Norwegians in a single township in east-central Iowa was part of a larger geographic pattern involving hundreds of thousands of people. And while Norwegian immigration to the U.S. and to Iowa began somewhat earlier than 1853, the greatest influx of Norwegians occurred well within the period of significance for Olive Township. The focus on the Norwegians of Olive Township also illuminates certain important cultural and social features and settlement patterns that typify the Norwegian-American experience and impact on the life and landscape of the American Midwest.

Before turning our attention to the Norwegians in Olive Township, the broader history of Norwegian immigration to the U.S. must be briefly sketched out. This will include a discussion of some general features of Norwegian-American social and cultural practice and a consideration of the role of the Lutheran church in the life of the immigrant in rural areas of the Midwest.

The first "considerable body of Norwegian immigrants to America" arrived in New York harbor on October 15, 1825.[1] Having crossed the Atlantic aboard the sailing ship *Restaurationen*, the 53 passengers and crew were hereafter known in Norwegian-American immigration history as the "sloopers," and they inaugurated a migration that brought more than three-fourths of a million Norwegians to America in the 19th and 20th centuries. The period of the largest emigration from Norway began in the mid-1860s and continued into the early 20th century, with the highest number leaving in 1882 (29,000). Other than Ireland, no other European country lost such a high proportion of its population to emigration. The emigrants were mostly farm dwellers who had become superfluous in Norway due to a rising birth rate and farm consolidation. Another factor was religious dissent, and to many, America offered the best opportunity to preserve a lifestyle pursued over many generations, own and control land, and practice the religions of their choice.[2]

Most of the "sloopers" settled in upstate New York, and some migrated in the 1830s to Illinois, specifically to the Fox River valley in La Salle County about 70 miles southwest of Chicago, and this became one of the most important "mother settlements" from which other locations farther west were settled. At about the same time, more Norwegians arrived direct from Norway, and purchased land in neighboring Kendall County around the city of Lisbon. This became known as the "Lisbon Settlement," and the Norwegians in Clinton County who did not come directly from Norway came from Lisbon. The Fox River and Lisbon settlements were the major sources of the Norwegians who moved into other counties of central and southern Iowa (Story, Benton, and Lee). The port of Chicago was an important factor in this pattern even though it was in its infancy when the first Norwegians arrived there in 1834. As the city grew along with the tide of immigration, many Norwegians and others found work there, enabling them to accumulate the money needed to buy land further west.

Subsequent major mother settlements in Racine, Waukesha, Dane and Rock counties of southwest Wisconsin beginning in the late 1830s were the sources for the Norwegians who came to Allamakee, Clayton and Winneshiek counties in extreme northeast Iowa beginning in 1849.[3] Many of these came via the port of Milwaukee, and until the advent of railroads, the primary route into Wisconsin and Illinois was by boat via the Great Lakes and Erie Canal via New York City and Quebec, although more than a few Norwegians came by steamboat to Iowa via New Orleans.

The Norwegians were not alone in this movement of Europeans and Americans into the Midwest. The largest ethnic group was German, but the pioneers included a substantial contingent of Americans from New England states as well. The Euro-American settlement of North America took place as the native Americans were dispossessed. Iowa was not opened for settlement until after the conclusion of the Black Hawk War, when (1833) most of the eastern one-quarter of the state became available. This was followed by other Indian cessions in the later 1830s and 40s, but a large portion of northeast Iowa (the Neutral Zone) remained off-limits until 1849. The northwest corner of Iowa was not available until 1851 (via the Treaties of Mendota and Traverse des Sioux). Norwegians moved into all these areas of the state as they became available and as the general movement out of Norway itself waxed and waned.

A three-stage chain migration describes the Norwegians' pattern in settling rural areas, and the movement was mostly in family units, not only from Norway but to other locations in the U.S. over time. The first stage would be the immigration of families to a newly opened settlement area, e.g. Lisbon, Illinois. These families would attract subsequent migration, often related people or those from the same parish in Norway. The original zone of settlement would soon become overcrowded and, as new territory became available, the latest settlers would move on and, after getting established, attract additional people directly from Norway, thus completing the cycle.[4] This explains why people with ancestral roots in the same places in Norway can be found together in particular Midwestern locations, belonging to particular Lutheran congregations here, and it lies behind the settlement events in Olive Township as well.

The Lutheran Church Among Norwegian-Americans

The Lutheran church played a key role in the settlement, establishment, sustenance and growth of Norwegian immigrant communities in the rural Midwest. This was true for the Swedes and Danes who settled here and other European ethnic groups along with the Catholic church, although the story is perhaps more complicated for the Norwegians. Whereas in Norway there was a single state sanctioned and supported Lutheran church (it remains today), when the Norwegians emigrated they managed to split up into several synods which numbered 14 over time. There were also other Protestant sects (Quakers, Baptists, Mormons and others) among the Norwegian-Americans, but they were fewer in number and were located mostly among Norwegians who settled in cities.[5]

This theological contentiousness was typical for the Norwegians among the Scandinavian immigrants, and it is reflected in the history of the Kvindherred congregation. All the several Lutheran synods were the same in the important social and cultural sustenance they provided to immigrants, who in some cases came to occupy land only recently vacated by native Americans or entered established communities where religious practice and language were both alien expressions.

Exact figures are not available, but most Norwegian settlers in the rural Midwest were and remain Lutheran. And even among the non-Lutherans and non-believers in any given area, the church was an important social and cultural institution. According to Gjerde and Qualey,

> Once built, the church quickly became the heart of the community . . . so that if one did not come to worship God one might come for other purposes, such as trading horses, . . . or hearing the latest news.[6]

Norwegian-American Lutherans representing the various synods shared many expressions of cultural identity. For example, the church buildings erected in rural areas from 1870 to about 1910 were predominantly a vernacular

wood frame neo-Gothic type of which Kvindherred is a representative example. Typically these were built by local carpenters with assistance from congregation members. Although plans were available from sources like the Augsburg Publishing House in Minneapolis, no two churches were built exactly alike, and the type was also used by other Protestant denominations.

As with other immigrant groups, preservation of social values and cultural heritage was achieved in worship and via many church-sponsored social activities. And even though public schools were established in their midst and supported by them, it was typical for the Norwegians to set up parochial schools, which usually were operated as a supplement to the public ones. Norwegian was used in these parochial schools, especially among the more conservative Norwegian Synod congregations, and religion was the primary subject matter, although secular subjects were sometimes included.[7]

The most important general cultural service provided by the church was to maintain the Norwegian language, which was an integral part of the immigrants' religion and identity. For many years after their initial establishment, Norwegians in American congregations used Norwegian exclusively in both church and parochial school. This was because church leaders felt that using the Norwegian language expressed a love of the Fatherland and that religion was manifest in the language.[8]

In the Midwest and elsewhere, the period of the First World War marked a turning point in the language issue for all European-American immigrants. An indication of this in Iowa was the famous language proclamation of Gov. William L. Harding. He proposed four rules that were to "obtain in Iowa during the war":

> First. English should and must be the only medium of instruction in public, private, and 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.[9]

Preservation of language was also a manifestation of the tendency in rural areas for ethnic groups to deliberately separate themselves from the larger social context, in order to more fully realize their own particular identity in a "context of freedom."[10]

The best sources for tracing the general move away from Norwegian to English are the Lutheran congregation records. In 1925 English exceeded Norwegian for the first time, though in rural parishes this shift took longer. By 1942 it was 90% of the Norwegians in churches using English.[11] Within the Norwegian settlement of Olive Township, the move away from Norwegian only began in 1919, when the congregation voted to hold half the services in English each year and to record the official minutes in English. In 1930, English replaced Norwegian for all church services. The language issue is also illuminated by several older Olive Township residents in a series of oral history transcripts gathered in 1994.

After 1917, when the three largest Norwegian synods merged to form the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, many pioneering efforts of the church in keeping the Norwegian heritage alive had begun to shift to secular groups. In 1946 the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America changed its name to the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and in

1960 it became part of the American Lutheran Church, which is not strictly Norwegian in membership. By this time the job of keeping the heritage alive was being done increasingly by secular groups such as the Sons of Norway, the Norwegian-American Historical Association, and the Bygdelag groups – associations of Norwegian-Americans who can trace their origins to specific districts (*Bygdelaget*) in Norway. In recent years, however, some traditionally Norwegian Lutheran congregations have reestablished a Norwegian-language worship service on something like a once-a-month basis.

Typical for all the Norwegian-American Lutheran churches was their support of auxiliary organizations for the different gender and age groups in the congregation. These included Ladies' Aid, Girls' Aid, Young People's Society and others. These served as opportunities for social activities, and their organization recognized the unique needs of the range of congregation membership. Another function of these groups was to raise money for local church needs plus foreign and home missions, and this was done by staging musical performances, craft and bake sales, and so on.

Home missions had top priority after 1890, since their job was to establish and support new congregations as immigration continued. Foreign missionary activity was also important, and this can be seen in the Kvindherred history. The foreign missions operated in many parts of the "undeveloped" world, e.g. at several locations in Africa. The American frontier was regarded as no less in need of the civilizing influence of Lutheran doctrine, and even though the Norwegian Lutherans in rural areas tended to isolate themselves from the larger social context, they saw it as their sacred duty to bring their version of Christ to wherever it was unknown, whether Africa or the western Dakotas.

Clinton County and the Norwegians of Olive Township

Clinton County is located in far east-central Iowa along the Mississippi River. A topographical map of the county shows that the northern half to two-thirds along the east is quite hilly, much like neighboring Jackson County. The southern part of Clinton County, however, is a fairly flat, gently rolling erstwhile prairie. Olive Township is the second from the west in the southern tier of townships, with the irregular Scott County border formed by the Wapsipinicon River.

Although Clinton County was not actually organized by the Territorial Legislature until 1840, it appears that the first white settler in the county was James D. Bourne, who established a trading post for the American Fur Co. in 1836 along the banks of the Wapsipinicon. Settlement in Olive Township began that year, also on the Wapsipinicon, near where the town of Buena Vista would soon be established.

The second settlement in Olive Township was Brushville, about 1½ miles northwest of Buena Vista, in the southeast corner of Section 31. This village had the first church in the township, the Free Will Baptist, and the first school, a log building which was also used for the Baptist services. Among the early settlers in the southern part of Olive Township were Hiram Brown, Charles Dutton and his four sons, Lyman Alger, Joseph Alger, E. F. Owen, William Scott, Bennet Warren, D. C. Curtis, Josiah Hill, Abraham Hendrickson, and others.[12] From the names alone, we can tell that the first settlers were Americans and came from the eastern United States.

Like the towns, the first farms in the township were established near the Wapsipinicon, where timber is plentiful. In later years many farmers in the northern parts of the township owned ten-fifteen acres in this area as wood lots. A mile or two north of the tier the land becomes mostly level. Originally it had many bogs, and much of it was

held out of the market as mineral land until after 1850. After draining, however, this proved to be highly fertile land.

The third town to be established in Olive Township was Syracuse, in the prairie area between five and six miles north-northwest of Brushville. The Chicago, Nebraska and Northwestern Railroad (later the Chicago & North-western) came through in 1856, running north of Buena Vista and Brushville and south of Syracuse. By 1860 the town of Calamus was platted, but a post office had been established at this location in 1858 and a number of set-tlers from elsewhere in the township had begun moving their houses and other buildings in by that time to take advantage of the opportunities a railroad would offer. Calamus is the only town remaining in the township, but the communities of Grand Mound and Wheatland, also on the railroad, also survive, and these are six miles east and four miles west of Calamus, respectively.

The advent of railroads linking eastern Iowa with Milwaukee, Chicago and cities of the eastern seaboard was a key factor in the rapid growth in population numbers in Clinton County beginning in the 1850s. The first railroad bridge across the Upper Mississippi River was opened at Davenport (Rock Island Railroad) in 1856, followed by a span at Clinton in 1865. Until this time the steamboat was the only practical way to move farm produce to eastern markets. In 1838 the population of Clinton County was 445. This number grew steadily over the next several years, but grew rapidly between 1852 (3,822) and 1854 (7,306). By 1860 it was nearly 19,000.

The population of Olive Township also grew rapidly during the middle of the century:

1856 = 532	1895 = 1292
1862 = 1017	1905 = 1237
1869 = 1348	1915 = 1204

but by 1895 had begun a decline which continues in the rural areas.

With due allowance granted for the inflated rhetoric characteristic of 19th century promotional material, it may be useful to quote the following description of Clinton County from the 1875 Andreas Atlas of the State of Iowa:

> Possessing a vast surface of the most fertile prairie, this county must of course raise with great ease all the different articles to which her soil and climate are favorable to an extent far beyond her own consumption. All the grains, fruits, grasses and roots of the temperate region grow luxuriantly and of fine quality. Wheat is raised with great ease and abundance, and is of a good grade, yet the chief dependence of the farmers for marketable grain is the corn crop, which very seldom fails to send the cart to the granary groaning beneath its weight of bright gold ears, while the excellent facilities for shipping either by rail or river insure the highest market prices. While the two varieties above mentioned are the staples, corn averaging from forty to fifty bush-els to the acre and sometimes going as high as seventy-five, and wheat from eighteen to twenty-five, other grains and vegetables common to the Middle States such as barley, rye, buckwheat, hemp, flax, Irish and sweet potatoes, turnips, tobacco, etc., etc., are produced with ease and in abundance, though many of them have received but little attention, owing to the fact that the markets are not so good and the people are unacquainted with their cultivation.[13]

Besides the Norwegians, the only other significant ethnic group in Olive Township is German, which dates from the 1860s when a number of families moved to the southern part of the township. They were Lutheran, and by 1871 the congregation was large enough to be formally organized, and the Immanuel Lutheran Church was built

in Section 3, two miles south of the Kvindherred church. The 1885 census showed 111 people living in Olive Township who had been born in Germany. The church building was demolished but the cemetery remains in use.

The Norwegian settlement of Olive Township began in 1853 and remained relatively small and isolated. It is worth noting that neither this settlement nor the Norwegians in the city of Clinton is mentioned in any of the standard works on Norwegian immigration, including the articles by George Flom, which deal specifically with Norwegian immigration to Iowa. The importance of the Lutheran church in Norwegian-American settlement history extends into historiography, since church congregation records and other church-related material are always contributive and sometimes the major and sole source (along with census reports) for anyone attempting to write historical accounts, such as the present one, of these and other Euro-American settlements.[14]

The first Norwegian settlement in Iowa took place in Lee County (1840), but it did not flourish. The first important settlements were in northeast Iowa and in Story and Benton counties a little later. The first Norwegians in Olive Township arrived in 1853 and, together with a small contingent in the city of Clinton, are the only recognizable group of these people in the county.

The first Norwegian settler in Olive Township was John D. Johnson Jr. who arrived in 1853. He was followed a year later by his parents, two brothers, and three sisters. Since the Kvindherred Centennial publication is our only source for these details, it is worth quoting this publication directly:

> Soon many other Norwegians with "America Fever" began to arrive. Some migrated directly to Olive Township; others settled here after a brief sojourn in Illinois. They came in small numbers in 1857, 58 and 59, and in 1860, it is told, a group of seventy arrived at one time.[15]

The Kvindherred congregation was founded in 1861 with 200 "souls." Elsewhere in Clinton County, at Clinton City, a congregation was created in 1865 with 100 people, but this was dissolved in 1890.[16] Many if not most of the first Norwegian families had roots in the Kvindherred parish in the Hardanger fjord of western Norway.

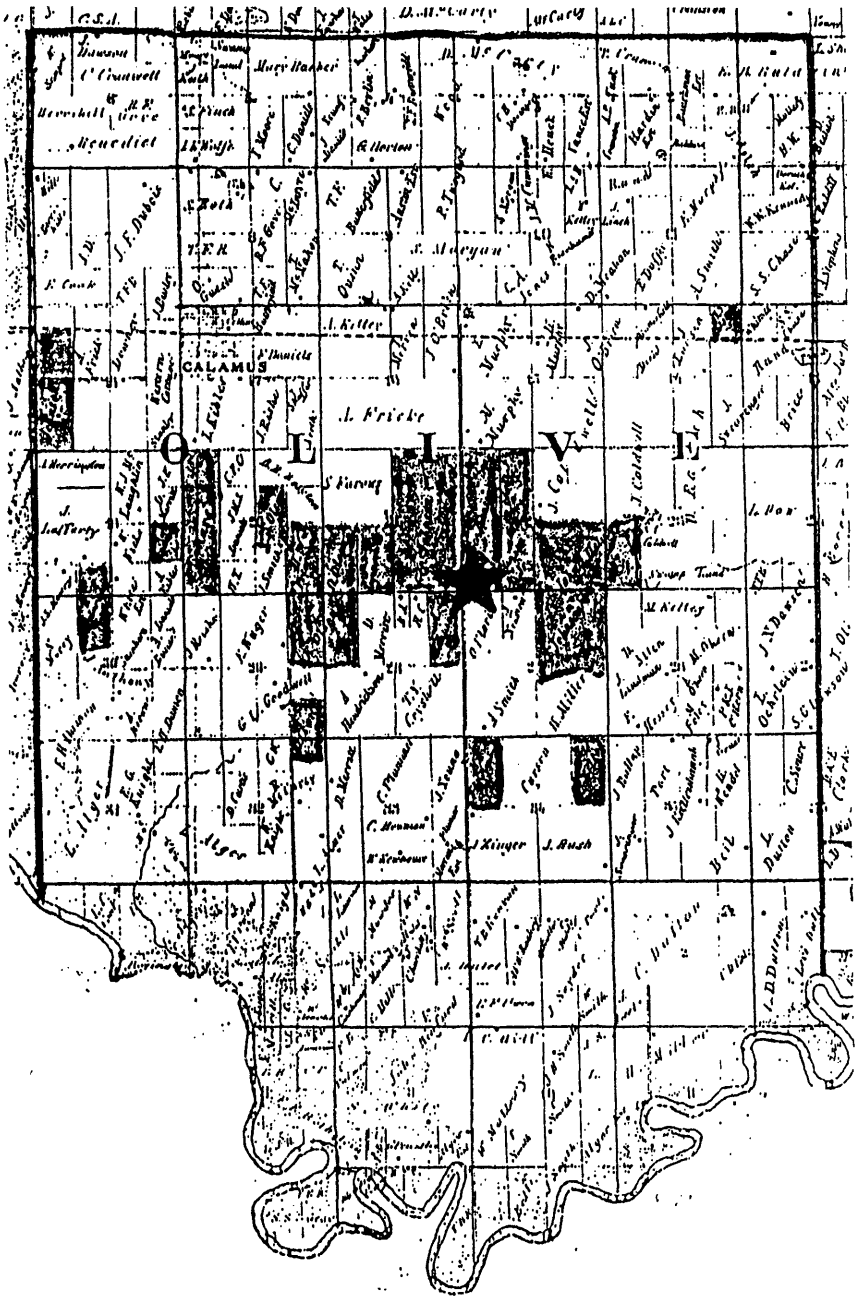
In the early days, the congregation was served by the resident pastor of Lisbon, Illinois, who also served the Norwegians in the Story City settlement. The settlement in Story County was much larger than Clinton County's, but their origins date from the same period and both were offshoots from the older Lisbon and Fox River enclaves. According to Qualey, the Fox River settlement was "filled up" by the late 1840s, and a large contingent from Norway went on to Story County in 1855 after learning of the "vast reaches" of government land available at $1.25/acre west of the Mississippi.[17]

Iowa State census figures for 1856 list 14 Norwegians in Clinton County. The 1860 Federal census counted 55 individuals (15 families), and 213 individuals were enumerated for the County in 1905. This is somewhat at odds with Norlie's figures for the Kvindherred congregation (200 in 1861 and 325 in 1915). An additional figure, from church records, is 404 souls in 1868.

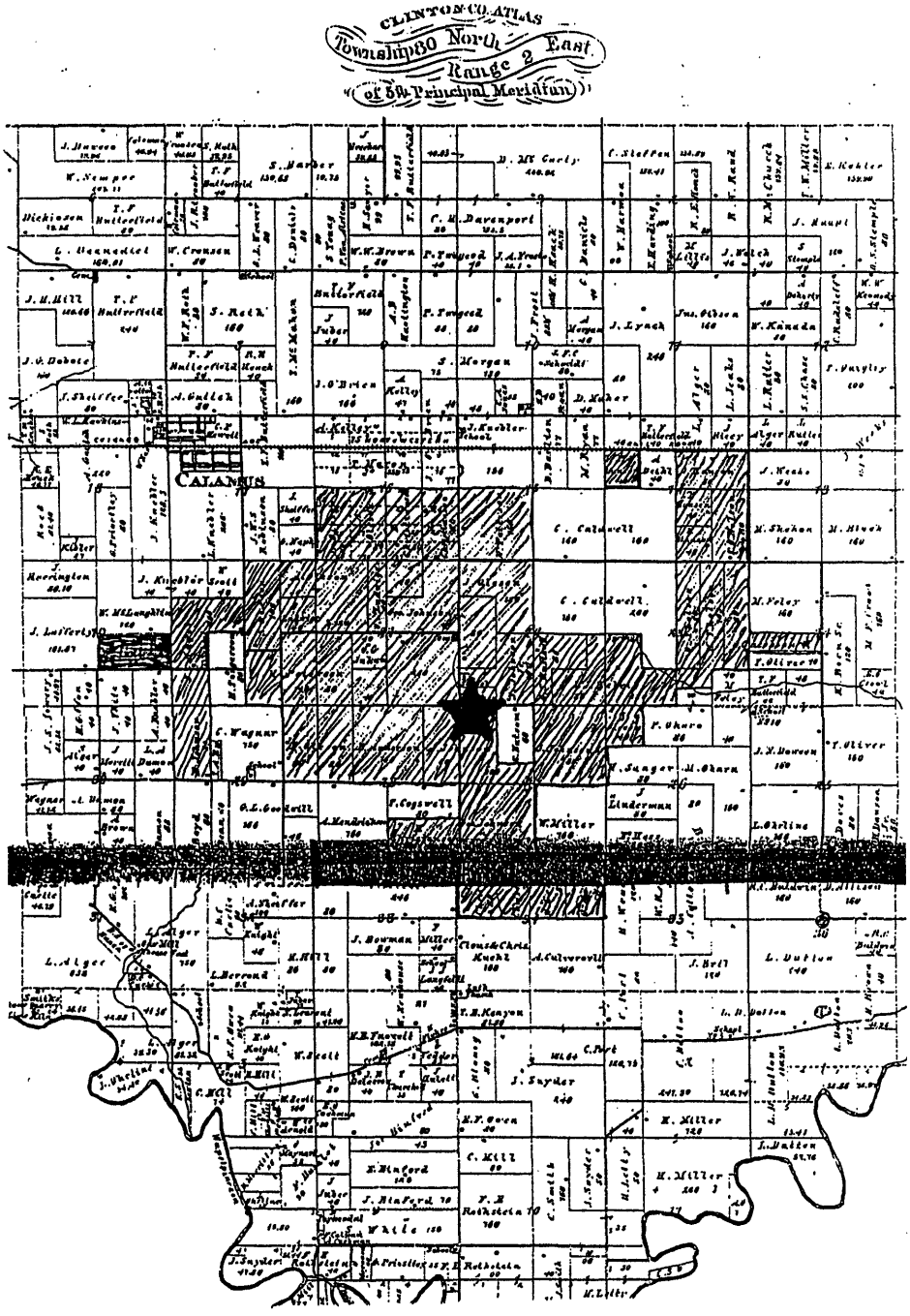
The Norwegians who settled in Olive Township were, with almost no exceptions, farmers. A series of atlas plat maps included here shows the land ownership distribution patterns beginning in 1865. Individual farmsteads varied in size over the years, and certain individual farmers bought land in the area not contiguous with where they lived. Such holdings together reached several hundred acres in some cases. As immigration continued and as children became adults and established their own farms, the acres owned by members of the Norwegian settlement increased. Much of the land settled had been swamp, but these sections were mostly drained and the area remains

1865 Plat Map of Olive Township - Land Owned by Norwegians (shaded).
The star is the location of Kvindherred Church.

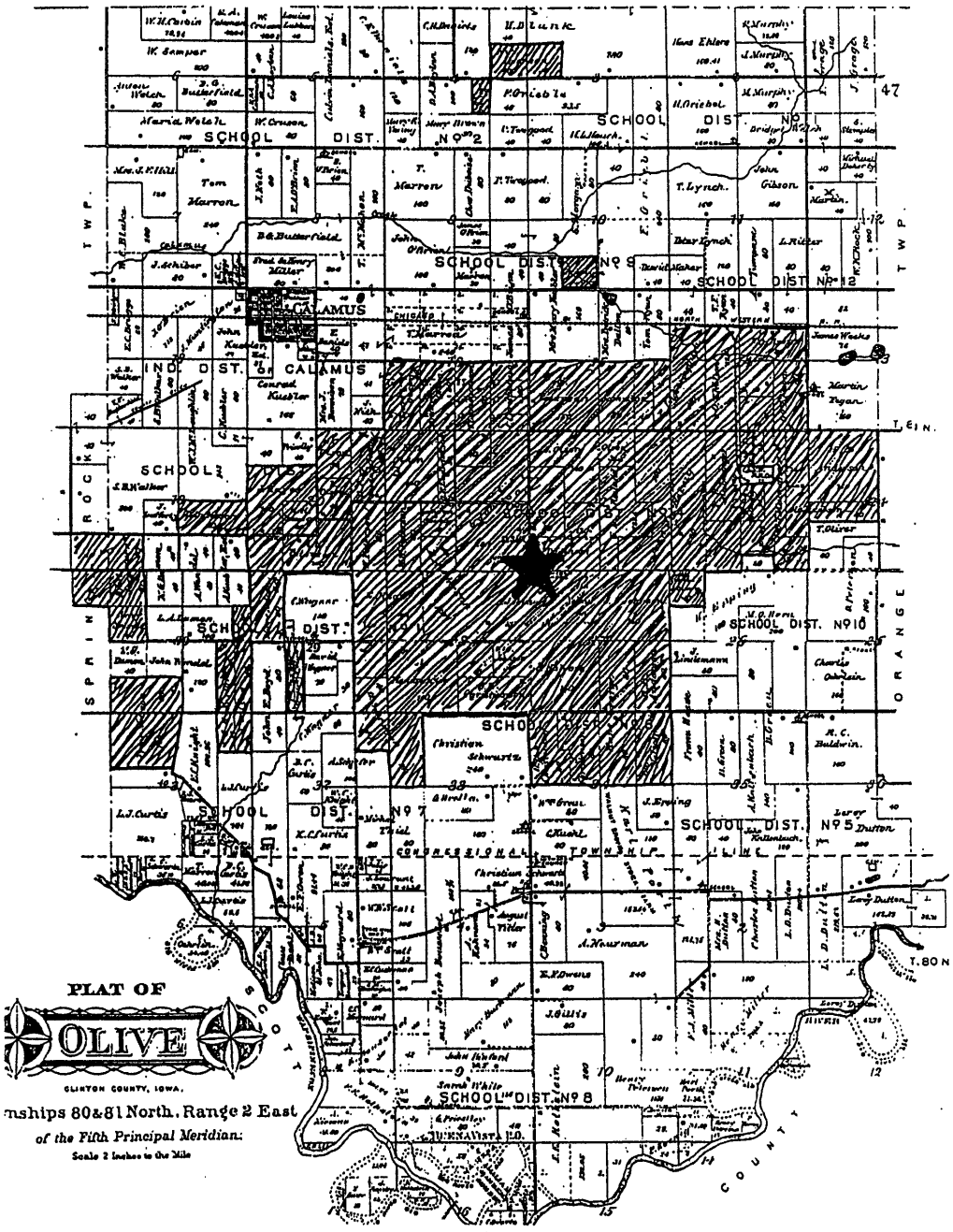
Source: Naumann, Molly Meyers. Clinton County, Iowa: A Survey of the Farmsteads of Olive Township: c. 1840-c.1940 and the Norwegian Settlement in Olive Township: 1853-1946. Prepared for the Clinton County Historic Preservation Commission, 1994. p. 49.



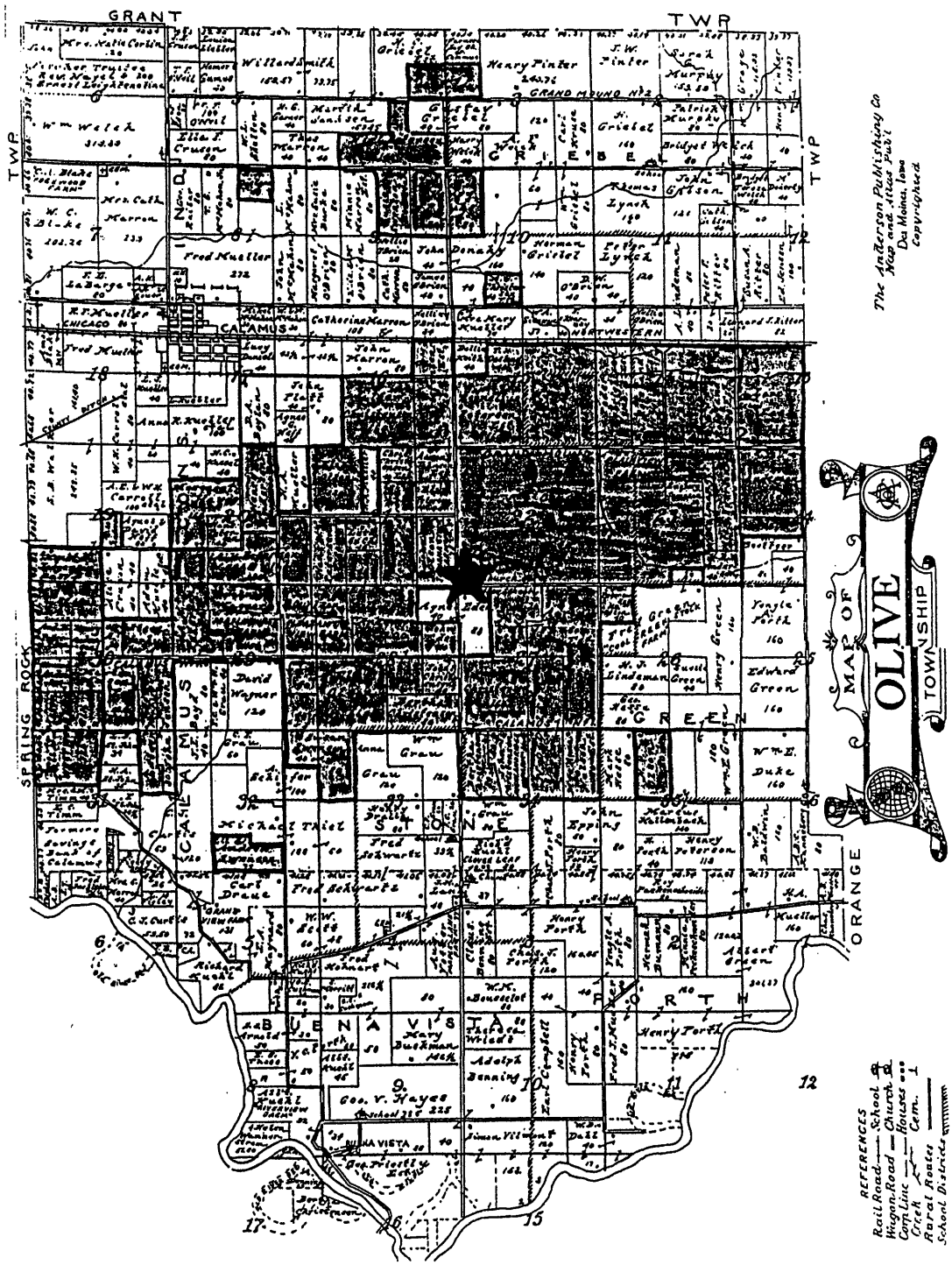
1874 Plat Map of Olive Township - Land Owned by Norwegians (shaded)
The star is the location of Kvindherred Church.
Source; Naumann, op. cit., p. 50



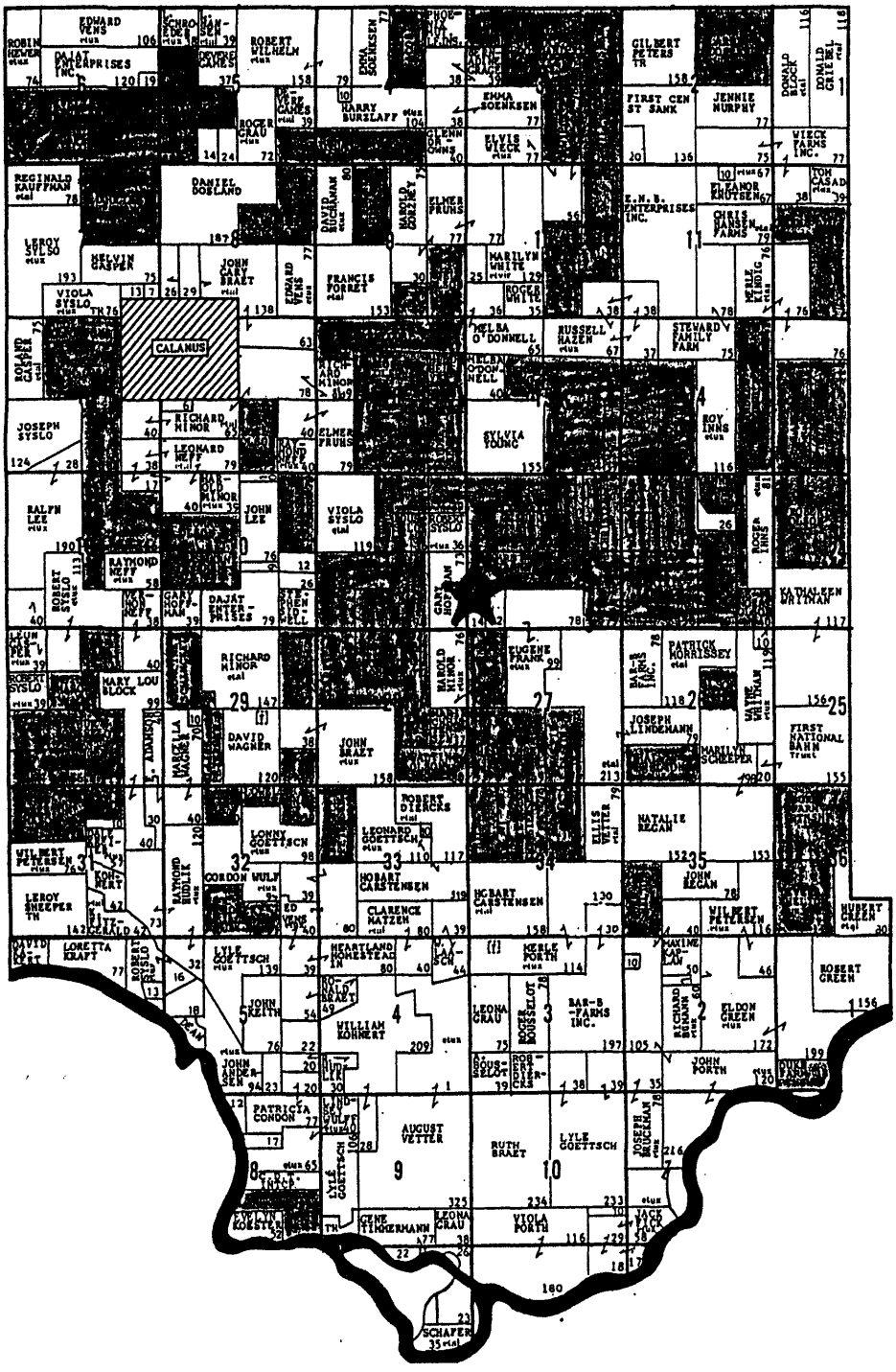
1894 Plat Map of Olive Township - Land Owned by Norwegians (shaded)
The star is the location of Kvindherred Church.
Source; Naumann, op. cit., p. 51.



1925 Plat Map of Olive Township - Land Owned by Norwegians (shaded)
The star is the location of Kvindherred Church.
Source: Naumann, op. cit., p.53.



1994 Plat Map of Olive Township - Land Owned by Norwegians (shaded)
The star is the location of Kvindherred Church.
Source: Naumann, op. cit., p. 54.



fertile and highly productive. By the time that the 1879 Clinton County history was published, the "Norwegian Settlement" had achieved a well-recognized identity. Along with several biographies of individual farmers, this publication notes that,

> A large representation in the present population (of Olive Township) is of Norwegians, an industrious and thriving people. They have a Lutheran Church in the southeastern part of the township and have recently erected a very fine church edifice. They also have a parsonage and sustain a pastor, who preaches to them in their native tongue.[18]

This church and the first one, built in 1865, are located in approximately the center of this settlement cluster, which signifies both the importance of that institution to the community and the fact that the Johnson brothers were the first settlers here and provided the land for both churches and the cemetery. The first church building was built on the northwest corner of Section 27 and was later moved 500 feet to the new church lot where it remains today. A public school (the "Johnson School") was also in this area from 1865 (no longer extant) between the current church and the cemetery.

The 1911 County history includes biographies of some of the first and second generation settlers which indicate that they had done quite well in their adopted country and also sheds light on certain social and political activities of their subjects:

> Nils O. Olson (born in Olive Twp. in 1861, son of John J. Helvig) owns 1016 acres! "He has put on many of the later improvements and keeps the place well tilled and well improved in every way, being one of the up-to-date and most progressive farmers of the county. As he has prospered, he has purchased various adjoining farms to the home place, and he has been wonderfully successful as a general farmer and stock raiser. He has maintained the old home in good order and everything about the place, which is substantial and attractive, indicates thrift and prosperity and that a gentleman of splendid tastes has its management in hand."[19]

Engle J. Christensen was described as "among the most progressive of the younger generation of agriculturalists of Olive Twp. . . . 160 acres in Section 27, SW ¼, involved in general farming and stock raising. Lutheran and Republican."

Eli Olson had 160 acres in Section 28, SW ¼ and was "engaged in general farming and raises some stock. Educated in public schools in this county in both English and Norwegian. Organizer and president of the Farmers and Business Men's Mutual Telephone Co. He and his family are members of the Norwegian Lutheran Church."[20]

The atlas plat maps included here, which include copies with the Norwegian-owned parcels shaded, document a pattern of growth and decline in the amount of land held and a pattern of consolidation and dispersal by 1994.

We know from church records, family histories and oral history accounts that most of the population growth among the Norwegians in Olive Township was absorbed locally and that this is a partial explanation of the land ownership pattern here over time. There is also evidence that the typical pattern of Norwegian-Americans to migrate beyond initial settlement areas as the local population grew and land became available elsewhere applies also to the Norwegians of Olive Township as they and many other ethnic groups occupied the U.S. and Canada to the full extent of what was practical.

A photo in the Central Community Historical Society, DeWitt, from 1914 at the 50th Wedding Anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Chris Christensen represents an individual family reunion but also a record of the dispersal of many family member who had left Olive Township by that time.[21] The Kvindherred Church Golden Jubilee event held in 1927 attracted "hundreds of former residents." A large number of these were from Benton County and the larger cities of Clinton, Davenport, and Minneapolis and a scattering of other locations. Also notable was a contingent from Martin County, Minnesota, where a Lutheran church had been organized near Truman with 11 of the 13 charter families coming from Olive Township.[22]

The Norwegian settlement of Olive Township as demonstrated demographically and on the ground by land ownership, and the geographical relationship of the Kvindherred Church to these indices, has a sociological dimension as well, which adds content to the communal nature of this settlement pattern.

Language and religion and the desire to own farmland were the primary factors that led to the development of a recognizable enclave of Norwegians in Olive Township. By the time the children of the pioneers had mastered English and encountered non-Norwegians in the school setting and elsewhere, the broad pattern had been set. There is no evidence that life on the Norwegian farms was notably different from that on other farms in the area. Farming practice and the farmstead buildings within the Norwegian settlement do not manifest any noticeable departures from the local norm.

Several oral histories of Olive Township Norwegians (and others) provide vivid accounts of growing up in the area from about 1910 into the 1940s.[23] Most social gatherings were church events of one kind or another; and drinking, dancing, playing cards, and going to the movies were generally frowned upon. This conforms to a feature of Norwegian Lutherans in general, according to scholars who have studied them.[24]

The church events might be meetings of the various organizations like Ladies Aid, or simply weddings, christenings, or funerals. Church suppers were another typical social and fundraising event that attracted people from outside the settlement. As the *Wheatland Gazette* reported in December 1934,

> A special Norwegian supper will be served at Kvindherred Lutheran Church Friday evening December 7 commencing at 6:30. Regular Norwegian menu with lutefish (sic!), codfish, meatballs, and other favorite dishes. . . .

The report of a "Father & Son Banquet" held in October 1934 (*Wheatland Gazette*, Oct. 27, 1934) gives a comprehensive picture of what these affairs were like:

> FATHER & SON BANQUET: Kvindherred Lutheran Church southeast of Calamus was crowded to capacity last Friday evening when plates were laid for 150 who gathered to enjoy the annual Father-Son Banquet sponsored by the church. Many were present from Clinton, DeWitt, Grand Mound, Calamus and the surrounding community and all reservations were sold out early. Miss Esther Olson gave a pipe organ recital while the guests were assembling in the church, later marching into the spacious diming room to military music played by the Jensen Orchestra who also furnished several numbers during the dinner hour. The banquet dinner was served by the ladies of the church under direction of the choir of which Miss Olson is president. The tables were resplendent in decorations of yellow and white. Peter Olson gave the address of welcome, introducing Henry Stueland as toastmaster. The fathers were most ably represented by a response from Professor Svenson of Wartburg College, Clinton. Rev. Carlson of Norway, also gave a

splendid address and Rev. Homer Sheldahl, pastor of the Kvindherred Church, concluded the enjoyable program with a few appropriate remarks.

A number of the Norwegian children took part in local public school activities such as sports and band. Local newspapers reported on social events involving the Norwegians and others, e.g., a baseball game on May 12, 1895 when "The Norwegians had a set to with ball and bat in Aaron Johnson's pasture, the result being a score of 24 to 13 in favor of Calamus and they came home happy." (*Wheatland Gazette*, May 22, 1895). And debates were held at the Norwegian (Johnson) School every Tuesday evening where "Rattling good times are reported." (ibid., Feb. 19, 1890).

But the oral histories and other sources leave no doubt that church and family were the foci of community, and this conforms to the pattern for Norwegian Lutheran immigrant settlers throughout the rural Midwest. The Olson-Helvig history illustrates the family-oriented nature of communal life on the farms of these Norwegian Lutherans. In a long piece ("My Family Christmas during the 1930s") in the compilation, Joel Olson's sister Cleone Olson McCulloh gives a detailed account of the most important day in the year for a celebration of family ties. The Olson-Helvig family was very large by that time, but they all still went to the same church (Kvindherred). The gathering at the grandparents' farm was an event that took weeks to prepare for. Seating all the relatives occupied several rooms in the house, and the program included, besides a banquet of traditional Norwegian foods, singing carols in both Norwegian and English, bible readings, and what is perhaps the custom which best illustrates the reality of community for the people assembled. Known as the "*Taak*" custom, or Thanksgiving,

> The older folks' table start(s) the "*Takk*" custom. Then the rest of us can go to everyone in the house tonight and shake hands. We say "*Takk*" or "*Mange Takk.*" As a family we thank each other for what we have furnished for tonight's meal. But more than that – we shake hands with every member of the family, young and old. This also suggests the idea that we thank each other for the helping times all year long. We have been together as neighbors and as family when we are planting crops and harvesting all year. It also seems to carry with it a feeling, forgiveness. "I may have said or done something this year for which I am sorry." Thus the message "Please forgive me, I forgive you." Then we have the only time of the year that I have seen the men help in the kitchen.[25]

Doing the work of farming was of course what took up most of everyone's time. The families in Olive Township farmed with horses until the advent of WW II. A major event each year was the threshing of oats, which had to be a communal activity since a small number of steam-powered threshing machines had to process the grain of all the farms. The work required a dozen or more men and boys outside and a large contingent of women in the kitchen preparing food. No doubt there was some competition among the families as to the quality and quantity of the victuals made available, but a persistent theme in these events was the great food. The Norwegians in Olive Township had a threshing outfit, but the best known and busiest crew worked with the Hazen family (not Norwegian) who owned two machines and two steam tractors for power.

General population figures for Olive Township indicate that a peak was reached around 1870, with a slow decline thereafter at least in the countryside.[26] The same pattern may characterize the Norwegian settlement, although a year-by-year count is not available. The largest number found so far is 400, in 1868. By 1927 it was 260 but remained about the same as late as 1961, even though the congregation had split in two in 1949 with a second congregation (Faith Evangelical Lutheran, the same synod as the original church) being formed in Calamus. This is a significant persistence notwithstanding the fact that Olive Township Norwegian outmigration to Martin and

Norman Counties in Minnesota and elsewhere also occurred. Basing his view on geographical research, John Rice suggests that the persistence of ethnic groups in rural settings is related to "community cohesion."

> The social atmosphere produced in a rural church-centered community, particularly where the population derives largely from the same province in Europe, is conducive to putting down roots and inhibits rapid population turnover.[27]

Conclusion

The history of the Norwegian settlement in Olive Township of Clinton County presents an important opportunity to study a phenomenon that occurred at many locations in the Midwestern U.S. and elsewhere. While this community of Norwegian-Americans was too small to receive much attention by the major authorities on Norwegian immigration, it shares most of the features of the larger settlements, and its limited size presents an opportunity for a closer study of certain key elements in the general pattern of immigration-cultural crisis-assimilation-ethnic revival. This last is evident in the present day as genealogical research and travel both to and from Norway is increasing; to find relatives and the ancestral home place on one hand or to witness the final resting place of emigrant kin on the other.

An important problem that has emerged from this project in Olive Township, which is also a general one, is that the physical remains and in particular the built environment is being modified or obliterated to the point where the properties associated with the history under discussion can no longer represent the full scope of their period of significance. But since this problem is so burdened with complexities that emerge from the many conflicting themes in the American self-concept, in closing we can hope, perhaps, that the results of this project, and again the limited area may be an asset, will be informative to the people concerned in ways that will encourage preservation of their heritage.

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[1]The quotation is from Qualey, p. 4.

[2]In addition to Qualey, Semmingsen has been relied upon here for Norwegian immigration history.

[3]See Flom's account of Norwegian settlement in Iowa and Strand for the Norwegian settlements in Illinois.

[4]Qualey and Gjerde, p. 222.

[5]Qualey, Semmingsen and Blegen.

[6]Qualey and Gjerde, p. 220.

[7]ibid., p. 228.

[8]Blegen, p. 253.

[9]Chrislock, p. 81.

[10]Munch, pp. 64-65.

[11]Nelson, pp. 242-251.

[12]Wolfe, p. 322.

[13]Andreas., p. 484.

[14]The main published source for the Kvindherred congregation and the Norwegian Lutherans in Clinton is Norlie. The Kvindherred centennial publication is of key importance, and articles from 1927 in the *DeWitt Observer* and *The Clinton Herald* are also valuable. See Section I, Bibliography.

[15]Our Savior's Lutheran Church. Dedication Services Brochure (1953), p. 7.

[16]Norlie, Vol. II, pp. 524-525.

[17]Qualey, pp. 93-94.

[18]Allen, p. 632.

[19]Wolfe, pp. 494-5.

[20]ibid., pp. 540, 565.

[21]Reproduced also in the Kvindherred centennial history, p. 17.

[22]ibid., p. 35

[23]These have been transcribed and bound into a booklet available at the DeWitt Museum. The interviews of particular interest are with Preston Mason, Pershing Johnson, Hildred Nerhus, Waltin Olson, and Audrey Henning.

[24]Hansen, Chapter 5. Blegen, pp. 247-8.

[25]McCulloh, p. 76.

[26]In 1870 it was 1,580 for the township. In 1880, when Calamus was enumerated separately for the first time, it was 1,453 for the countryside and 153 for Calamus. Subsequent totals show an overall decline with Calamus growing. By 1905 (total for township) = 1,237, 1915 = 1,204, and 1925 = 1,181. All are State Census figures.

[27]Rice, Quotation on p. 199.

Associated Property Types

I. NAME: The buildings, structures, objects, and districts representing "Norwegian Settlement in Olive Township: 1853-1950."

II. DESCRIPTION:

The resources (a collective term for the above-named categories) in this property type are varied in terms of use, size, and location. The unifying factor is that each is associated with the Norwegian settlement that occurred in Olive Township, Clinton County, Iowa.

The largest number of resources in this property type will be farmsteads. These are clustered around Our Savior's Evangelical (Kvindherred) Lutheran Church in the center of the township. The buildings on these farmsteads are not the original buildings, but represent second and third generations of construction. A number of these have been designated as Century Farms. These farmsteads will be composed of multiple buildings: a residence and barn, and usually a corn crib, hog house, machine shed and garage. Other resources on the farm site may include: chicken houses, silos, windmills, windbreaks, and/or gardens. With few exceptions the primary building material will be wood. There is one instance of a single building on a farmstead being significant, the George Johnson residence (1878) across from the church. This house is important because of its association with Johnson who was one of the first Norwegian settlers, but the rest of the farmstead is modern.

Church-related resources will be the other major property type. There are three identified resources in this group: the original school/church from 1865; the "new" church from 1877-8; and the Kvindherred Cemetery. The two church buildings are simple rectangular buildings of wood frame construction, have entrances on the gable end, and are painted white.

The physical condition of the farmsteads and church-related properties will vary somewhat, but for the most part these have been well maintained. Some may have had additions over the years. Residences may have lost (or gained) porches. New siding may have been applied to some houses and a few barns. The 1877-8 church has had a new basement and a major addition to the south, but neither impairs the integrity of the building.

III. SIGNIFICANCE:

The buildings, structures, objects, and districts that make up this property type illustrate the Norwegian settlement that took place in Olive Township beginning in 1853 and extending to 1950. As the eighth Norwegian settlement in the state of Iowa, Olive Township holds a place of importance in terms of ethnic influences in local development. One of the strengths of this settlement is the fact that Kvindherred Church (now Our Savior's) remains active today, and that many of the farms remain in the hands of direct descendants. The Norwegian heritage has not been overwhelmed and replaced.

IV. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS:

1. Significance (use or form) relates to Norwegian Settlement in Olive Township, 1853-1950.
Criterion A: properties that represent significant events and activities in the Norwegian settlement of Olive Township.
Criterion B: properties that are directly associated with the early Norwegian settlement leaders.
Criterion C: properties that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that illustrate the building techniques, types and/or styles that were used by the Norwegian settlers and their direct descendants, or which form an unusual group of buildings or structures that illustrate the Norwegian settlement during this period, or that in their relation to each other represent a pattern which distinguishes Norwegian-American farmstead layout.
Criterion D: properties that have the potential to yield additional information about the Norwegian settlement of Olive Township.

2. Qualifying building use will include: religious, educational, residential, agricultural, and possibly commercial/industrial.
Qualifying building materials will include: wood, brick, stone, stucco, metal, and concrete.

3. If a building has been moved, the move should have taken place within the period of significance (more than 50 years ago) and the integrity of both the building and surroundings not greatly impaired.

4. Integrity Considerations:
In all cases, the most important integrity consideration is that the building retain sufficient elements of the original design, materials, and setting, that the owner during the period of significance would recognize it.
Church-Related Resources. The basic shape and proportion of the building should be intact, with doors and windows not substantially altered. Some minor changes and/or additions may be acceptable if they do not obscure the primary facade, and are of sympathetic design, proportion, and construction material.
Residences. The basic shape and proportion of the house should be intact. Windows and doors should not have been moved or substantially changed. Porches should be sympathetic if not original. Alterations made during the period of significance for Criterion C properties may be accepted if made to secondary elevations, and of a scale and material sympathetic to the original design.
Barns. The basic shape and proportion of the building should be intact. Windows and doors should not have been moved or substantially changed. Alterations made during the period of significance may be accepted if made to secondary elevations, and of a scale and material sympathetic to the original design.
Agricultural outbuildings. The basic shape and proportion of the building should be intact without substantial changes to windows and doors. Additions should be of sympathetic design, proportion, and construction material. Application of modern siding will generally not be acceptable.
Commercial/Industrial Buildings. As none have been identified, no integrity considerations have been developed. This will be done as the need arises.
Districts. These areas must possess a sense of time and place, must relate to the building types, styles, and materials of the period of significance, have relatively few intrusions, and not have been altered to a high degree. Key structures will have few if any alterations, while contributing structures

may have undergone more changes. Modern siding, new windows, and porch alterations should be carefully reviewed to decide whether a structure is contributing or non-contributing.

5. Known Examples from the Intensive Survey: (** denotes NR eligibility)
T81N R2E

**	Sec 22 NWSW	Kvindherred Lutheran Church
**	Sec 22 NWSW	Original school/church
**	Sec 21 NESE	Kvindherred Cemetery
**	Sec 21 SE	Johnson Residence
	Sec 15 SWSE	Sampson Farm
	Sec 22 NWNE	Leonard Olson Farm
	Sec 23 NENE	Malmanger Farm
**	Sec 23 W½SW	Joel Olson Farm
**	Sec 27 SWSW	H. Christensen Farm
	Sec 28 SWNE	H. B. Anderson Farm
	Sec 33 NESW	Christian Schwartz Farm

6. The properties being nominated with this MPD are: Kvindherred Lutheran Church, School and Cemetery, Joel Olson (Helvig-Olson) Farm, George Johnson House.

Geographical Data

Properties nominated under this MPDF must be located in Olive Township, Clinton County, Iowa.

Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

This NRHP Multiple Property Documentation Form, along with three National Register nominations, is the latest in a series of projects in Clinton County administered by the County Historic Preservation Commission and State Historical Society of Iowa. The first of these was a Planning for Survey initiative. This was followed by reconnaissance and intensive level surveys of Olive Township, since this area was recognized as retaining "a high level of architectural integrity in the rural landscape."[1] Further research indicated that Olive Township was important also because a Norwegian settlement dating from the mid-19th century was identified. The present document is based in large part on the results of the 1994 survey as it pertains to Norwegian settlement.

Molly Myers Naumann was selected as the principal investigator for the 1994 project, and she worked closely with local volunteers, training them for the various tasks. Meetings to recruit volunteers were held at Our Savior's Evangelical Lutheran Church for two reasons: it is centrally located within Olive Township, and it was likely that church members would be able to provide much of the necessary information concerning Norwegian settlement. Orientation workshops were conducted at each phase of the project. Volunteers were responsible for the fieldwork, photography and mapping, archival and legal research, conducting the oral history interviews, the typing and collating of the final project report and site forms.

A reconnaissance survey was conducted on all pre-1940 farmsteads in Olive Township. All the roads in the township were traversed to identify which of the farmsteads appeared to meet the criteria of significance. Each of the identified farmsteads was then surveyed and a site inventory form was completed. Archival research was con-

ducted at the DeWitt Historical Museum, the Wheatland Public Library, the Clinton Public Library, and the State Historical Society libraries in Iowa City and Des Moines. Resources consulted include county and local histories and directories, state gazetteers, plat books and atlases, historic photographs, and letters. Volunteers read microfilm copy of selected area newspapers, and between 20 and 25 oral history interviews were conducted with long-time residents. Legal research was conducted in the Clinton County Assessor's Office.

The information gathered during the archival research and a close examination of the reconnaissance sites provided the consultant with enough information to select farmsteads to receive an intensive level survey. Additional research was done on these sites, and these were then evaluated for individual eligibility or for inclusion in a potential district.

A total of 113 farmsteads and three Norwegian church-related resources in Olive Township were documented in the reconnaissance survey. From these, 25 farmsteads and the church sites were selected to receive an intensive level survey. Of these, eight farms, one house and three church properties were found to have connections to the Norwegian settlement in Olive Township. Two farms, the three church properties, and the house were found to be eligible for listing on the NRHP.

In 1999 the Clinton County H.P. Commission was awarded another grant to produce three NRHP district nominations and a NRHP MPDF with a primary focus on the Norwegian settlement. The present author was hired as a consultant for this work. After visiting Olive Township, reviewing the previous work products, inspecting the properties to be nominated, and conferring with Ann Soenksen (Project Director), Melody Witt (HPC Chairperson) and Lowell Soike, it was decided to substitute the George Johnson House for one of the two farmstead districts initially proposed for nomination. This decision reflects a desire to include the full range of significant property types and areas of significance (European Ethnic Heritage, Social History, Architecture) in the nomination process. The Johnson House is the single most architecturally significant property identified in the survey and the only extant property with historic integrity that can be related to the first Norwegian family that came to Olive Township.

It has already been noted that the farmsteads of Olive Township had been selected for survey because of their relatively good historic integrity within the broader scope of Clinton County. That is, a large number of these farmsteads included unmodified pre-1940 structures in use or in good condition. A rather disappointing result of that survey activity, however, was that almost no properties that could be associated with the first period of settlement had survived with enough integrity to be eligible for NRHP listing. The George Johnson House is of exceptional importance in this regard and also because it is associated with the Johnson family who were the first Norwegian settlers in Olive Township. The H. Christiansen Farm, which was intended to be nominated together with the Olson Farm in the current project, was found to have no structures dating to the period of first settlement, and the Olson Farm better represents the full range of structures that characterized Norwegian farms in the settlement area.

In the present phase of survey, identification, and evaluation of the Norwegian farmsteads in Olive Township, some additional contextual material was added to provide a broader view of how the activities in Olive Township related to the large patterns of Norwegian-American immigration and the role of the Lutheran church in this. It had already become apparent in the earlier work that it was unlikely that any distinctively Norwegian or Norwegian-American building types or materials or farmstead layout would be found here. Some additional research on these questions was carried out, and the only example of a specifically Norwegian farmstead property identified is the first farmhouse on the Joel Olson farm which, even though it has been converted into a garage, appears to be an example of the *Akerhusisk* type, which has Medieval origins and is "the most common form associated with Norwegian-American farmsteads."[2]

The first Norwegian settlements in Iowa were in the rugged hill country of Winneshiek, Clayton, and Allamakee counties, and the first farmstead structures built there were of log construction. Since logs had been an important building material in Norway for millennia, the people and building traditions coming to northeast Iowa were pre-adapted to the bountiful timber available there, but surveys of Norwegian-related farmsteads in Winneshiek County have revealed only scattered properties stemming from the first generation of settlement and representing distinctive Norwegian types.[3]

In central Clinton County the timber was sparse but pine lumber from northern Wisconsin was available by 1850 via the Mississippi River, so the earliest permanent buildings were probably of wood frame construction. Logs are not as adaptable to recycling as dimension lumber and log buildings have often been left standing on farmsteads even when they are no longer in use.

The question of whether Norwegian-American farmsteads in general are distinctive in the layout of buildings has not been adequately researched to date. There may be some consistent relationship between those in northeast Iowa and the farms of Norway, since Norwegian farms are mostly in a rugged terrain quite unlike the flat landscape of Olive Township. An investigation of this issue in an important Norwegian settlement area in Wisconsin produced inconclusive results.[4]

It is possible that a renewed scrutiny of the Olive Township farmsteads may reveal additional remnants of specifically Norwegian features. The most likely location for this will be within existing farm dwellings, which today are the result of multiple additions and modifications.

The significance evaluations of the Norwegian-related farmsteads of Olive Township have been made essentially on the basis of demonstrated geographic and communal links to the core area represented by the current church, the cemetery, and the George Johnson House. Physically this zone is on both sides of 190th Avenue (Y52) from the northwest corner of Section 27 (the original location of the 1865 church), north to the cemetery at 255th St., a distance of a bit more than one-half mile. This is within the first land obtained by John Johnson Jr. and, in addition to the existing properties, was also the location of the Johnson School, just north of the present church and the first George Johnson House, across the highway from the 1878 edifice, which was where the Kvindherred congregation held its organizational meeting.

The church properties have been evaluated as to how well they represent the types and materials typical for Norwegian Lutherans in the U.S. at the time of their construction and for the information they contain that is not available elsewhere (cemetery).

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[1]Naumann, p. 1.

[2]Henning, p. 150.

[3]Johnson, Steven, personal comunication 12-7-99. D. Henning, personal communication, 11-18-99.

[4]Bakken.

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