

HISTORY OF  
HOUSTON COUNTY  
MINNESOTA

EDITED BY  
FRANKLYN CURTISS-WEDGE

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*ILLUSTRATED*

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1919  
H. C. COOPER, JR. & CO.  
WINONA, MINN.

Page 175 - Spring Grover Township History

Paragraph 5

John Anderson Kroshus identified as early settler

Page 477 – Andrew Kroshus biography (no relation)

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John sells his first farm to Andrew in 1853

Arthur B. Bow, of Vermont, who arrived about the same time, or perhaps a little earlier than Smith, built a cabin just west of Smith's and staked out large quantities of desirable land with a view to speculation. After a while, however, he sold out to Embrick Knudson and went further west.

Mr. Knudson, who was a native of Norway, had come to Spring Grove about 1854. He assisted in the organization of the township, and was for several years postmaster and town treasurer. About 1863 he also moved farther west, finally settling in Stearns county, where he died in 1880. One of his children became Mrs. Nels Bersen of Fillmore county.

John Vale, a pioneer from Iowa, came here in the winter of 1851-52 and ran a line around immense tracts of choice land, also cutting and splitting some rails. In the following spring or summer, however, he moved away, after selling his rails, and such rights as he acquired, to Knud Knudson, Knieland and Fingal Asleson, who remained here as permanent settlers. Anthony Huyck, of Caledonia, came to Spring Grove soon after Mr. Smith, and, having ox teams, made some valuable improvements. Many other settlers arrived during the summer of 1852. Most of these were making a general western progress on the lookout for a desirable location, and, finding here all that they desired, took up claims and remained.

During the first summer, when this region was attracting so much attention, there was quite an immigration of enterprising young men and women from Norway, some of whom had halted for a brief while in Wisconsin. A number of these men rose to positions among the leading farmers, business men and politicians of the county, and in most cases their descendants are still living here. Among the more prominent of these were the following: Peter Johnson Lommen, section 3; Even Evenson Haime, section 9; H. Narveson, section 10; Fingal Asleson and Knud Knudson, section 10; Ole and Tolef Amundson Berg, section 16; Torger Johnson Tenneland, section 15. Knud Olson Berg located on section 10, but after his death a number of years later his family removed. Among other Norwegians who arrived in 1852, or within a year or two afterwards, were: Gudbrand M. Rund, Levor and George Timanson, Gilbert Nielson, Myrha and Hans Nielson and Ole C. Steneroder. The locality in which these men settled was known as Norwegian Ridge, and on the organization of the county it became the name of the voting precinct. One settler who came here, named Ole Oleson, was known far and near as "Big Ole," from his extraordinary size. In a year, however, he removed to Iowa.

In the southern part of the township the earliest settlers were Ole O. Ulen, on section 26; John Anderson Kroshus, section 26; Ole Christopherson, sections 34 and 35, with others. The locality is known as "the valley," and contains some of the finest cultivated farms in the county.

The southwestern part of the township, lying south and east of Riceford Creek, is mostly prairie, and much of the land was bought at the early land sale by speculators. At a later period it was settled largely by Americans. Among these was W. Banning, who, in the fall of 1852, built a grist mill on the creek in section 19. Though a small and primitive affair, and slow in its operation, it was very useful to the settlers, as it was the first

the southern half of the old home. Since then he has purchased 240 acres more, making a fine farm of 410 acres. Some years ago he built a brick house, 26 by 30 feet, two stories, to which he has since added a wing 20 by 20, thus giving him a comfortable slightly thirteen-room house. He also built a barn 40 by 60 by 20 feet, with a full stone basement of eight feet. In 1912 he built a swine house, 26 by 80 feet, with a cement feeding floor. Among his other buildings are a stone silo, 14 by 38 feet, and a machine shed 16 by 50 feet, together with a shop, 12 by 14 feet. The farm is well equipped with teams, tools, machinery and implements and is well fenced. About 200 acres are under the plow, and the remainder in pasture and timber. For the past fifteen years Mr. Kolsrud has been a breeder of registered Hereford cattle, and now has a herd of thirty pure bred and forty good grades. His drove of Poland-China swine headed by several pure blooded sires numbers about 100. Mr. Kolsrud has stock in the Spring Grove Stock & Grain Co., in the Spring Grove Farmers' Co-operative Creamery and in the Spring Grove Hospital. He has been the treasurer of his school district for fifteen years. Mr. Kolsrud was married April 12, 1883, to Mary Kroshus, born April 11, 1860, daughter of Andrew and Thurine (Hackness) Kroshus, of Spring Grove, and this union has been blessed with seven children: Josephine Adelia, born Feb. 3, 1884; Theoline Belinda, born Aug. 5, 1889; and now wife of Henry Rank of Black Hammer township; Bernard, born Sept. 27, 1891; Arthur, born Jan. 21, 1893, and died in infancy; Anna Marie, born June 9, 1894, and now a teacher in North Dakota; Amos, born June 6, 1896; and Oscar, born Sept. 5, 1899. The family faith is that of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran church.

**Bear Kolsrud**, the pioneer, was born in Norway in 1816, and was there married in 1848 to Joroud Olestaater, who was born in 1820. In 1848 they set out with their two daughters, Gertrude and Anna, and found their way to Rock county, Wisconsin, where they stopped for a short time. From there they started for Houston county. The trip was made in true pioneer style, the ox cart which brought their goods being a primitive vehicle with wheels sawed from logs, and with a wooden axletree. They drove two cows, and the wife walked most of the way, carrying a baby. Upon their arrival in Spring Grove they had but seventy-five cents. They settled on forty acres of government land in section 26, and moved into a dugout. In this dugout the twins, Anna and Gumbjor, were born. These twins died of typhoid at the age of ten years. Bear Kolsrud devoted the remainder of his life to the development of his farm. He added to his possessions until he owned 410 acres, on which he made many improvements. After a useful life he died in 1878. His wife died in 1907. They were the parents of three sons and five daughters, all of whom are dead except Thor B.

**Andrew P. Kroshus**, one of the earliest pioneers of Spring Grove township, was born in Norway, and was there reared to young manhood. Then resolving to try his fortunes in the New World he set sail for America and landed after a long voyage of fourteen weeks aboard a sailing vessel. Coming at once to Wisconsin, he found employment in the Putnam sawmill at Muskego, some eighteen miles from Milwaukee. There, in addition to board and room his monthly wages were \$6 the first year, \$11 the second

year, \$16 the third year and \$24 the first four months of the fourth year. He was offered \$30 to remain, but having saved practically all his earnings he decided to start farming. Accordingly in the fall of 1853 he set out on foot and after a walk of 275 miles, found a friend, John Kroshus, living in Spring Grove township. He bought John's claim of 200 acres for \$150, and remained with him that winter, getting out rails, and making a few improvements. In the spring he walked back to Muskego, married, bought a yoke of oxen and an old wagon, and brought his wife back here. He gradually increased his holdings until he was the owner of 313 acres of good land. He died Nov. 12, 1882. Thurine Haakeness, the wife of Andrew P. Kroshus, was born in Norway, June 18, 1834, and was brought to this country by her parents, who set sail from Christiania, Norway, in a small sailing vessel loaded with iron, April 14, 1840, and landed at New York, Oct. 14, 1840, after a voyage of six months. From New York they went by rail to Albany, then by Erie Canal to Buffalo, thence by the lakes to Milwaukee, where they were met by friends who took them to Muskego in an ox cart. That fall, in company with Torger Aastensen Luraas, they built a single room log cabin, 14 by 14 feet. Mr. Haakeness had but twenty-five cents when he reached Muskego. Mr. Luraas had but \$6. But they had brought tools and axes with them from the old country, and with these set out with a will to better themselves. The first winter, the two families of fourteen people lived in the single room. In the spring of 1842 each family purchased a forty-acre tract of land. In 1853 the cholera epidemic swept the community, and carried away Mr. and Mrs. Haakeness, after they had secured a pledge from the daughter Thurine that she would look after her brother. Mrs. Kroshus died in February, 1916.