

Norwegian-American Cultural Landscapes in Dane County, Wisconsin:
Changes through Time

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Geography 565
Professor Gartner
14 December 2010

Abstract

Norwegian immigration to Dane County, Wisconsin began in the 1840s because of land availability and economic opportunities and accelerated by the 1870s, due to demographic changes. Norwegian immigrants formed communities around the Norwegian Lutheran Church, first at Koshkonong creek and later in new settlements as they spread westward. The Norwegian cultural impress on the Dane County landscape reflects not only the values of the broader culture or institutions such as the Church, but also the individuals themselves. Across gender and social class, the discursive story of Norwegian immigration is found in Dane County's toponyms, architecture, monuments and celebrations.

Introduction

Research Objectives

This research project is an examination of the cultural impress of Norwegian culture on the landscape of Dane County over time. Two main areas of focus for our research have been the Norwegian Lutheran Church and place names, or toponyms. Other aspects of the cultural landscape that help to broaden this study are tobacco sheds, art and material culture, and gravestones, each offering important elements to our narrative. The discursive changes in the cultural landscape present themselves in a variety of ways, some very obvious and others, opaque. As a populous group of early settlers to the area, understanding Norwegians and Norwegian-American culture in Dane County is vital understanding the broader culture of Wisconsin as well as other areas of the Midwest which also received large numbers of immigrants during the nineteenth century. Richard Schein writes, “Ultimately, cultural landscape study is important to critical human geographies if we see the landscape as discourse materialized, the tangible and visible scene serving to normalize or naturalize social and cultural practice, to reproduce it, to provide a means to challenge it” (Schein 2010: 224). He further goes on to say that “cultural landscapes are themselves representations embedded in, and that embed meaning in, everyday life” (Schein 2010: 225). In examining these discursive changes in our cultural landscape, we are presented with a geographic story that is specific to a Norwegian-American context, but that has wider implications about the nature of any cultural impress on the landscape. Likewise, our narrative should signal the possibility of studying these human effects on the environment across space and at differing scales.

Research Methodology

The impress of a particular culture on a landscape is open to a variety of interpretations, can be studied using a number of methodologies and will depend on the philosophy of the researcher and the choices that he or she makes. For this project, we have selected from this field of choices those methods which best address our research objectives. As we focus on the changes in the Norwegian-American landscape of Dane County over time, certain methodologies have necessarily been excluded. For example, while conducting interviews would certainly have given us some additional insight into contemporary attitudes and cultural expressions, in the interest of time, we have elected to focus on other forms of primary data. Instead, we have examined multiple facets of the physical environment through archival research, comparing what has changed to that which has remained the same. Norwegian Lutheran churches were the focus of our architectural analysis because of their central importance to the development and cultural sustenance of the community. Using public records, we have also uncovered clues about the changes in Norwegian-American culture, vis-à-vis toponyms, census data and maps. Finally, where useful, we examine personal documents such as letters and photographs that help to tell the human story of this community.

In order to evaluate how the culture of Norwegian-Americans is present in the landscape, we have chosen a humanistic approach to our research. Humanistic geographer Yi-Fu Tuan asserts that “unlike physical features, elements of the human landscape cannot be explained as the product of simple sets of forces” (Tuan 1976: 183). In line with these ways of approaching our research, we have rejected the quantitative methods of other geographers. The individual, human choices of Norwegian immigrants contribute to how and why they arrived here. Personal motivations in addition to cultural factors are present on the landscape in a variety of forms. Often we can learn something about the population as a whole by looking to the individual. This

is evident in the evolution of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America. Each new immigrant to the Koshkonong Prairie or the East Blue Mounds or Perry settlements had a voice with enormous potential to change the particular small community that he or she was living in. The results were entirely new synods, schisms within churches and, ultimately, an identity which is more Norwegian-American than Norwegian.

A primary component of our research will be analysis of Norwegian-American architecture through time. As geographers, one of our limitations in examining architecture is the lack of sufficient training to thoroughly evaluate the meaning of the structures that we look at. It is for that reason that we choose to contextualize the presence of certain structures within our community of study, rather than focus solely on the nuances of architectural cultural expressions and styles. For those churches which are still active today, we gather much useful information from church registers and congregational histories, as well as from the general state of the building and grounds themselves. Buildings adjacent to those we are already studying have value to our research, as well. The introduction to *Invitation to Vernacular Architecture: A Guide to the Study of Ordinary Buildings and Landscapes* asserts that “the best reason for studying buildings is the potential they hold for helping us in the humanistic endeavor of better understanding who we are and why we have done the things that we have” (Carter and Cromley 2005: xxii).

One of the ways that Norwegian-Americans assimilated into American culture while maintaining some Norwegian heritage was in the buildings that they constructed. For example, Marion J. Nelson notes in the forward to her book *Material Culture and People's Art Among the Norwegians in America*, “immigrant building in Coon Valley, Wisconsin, continues Norwegian traditions beneath a surface of Americanization.... Farmsteads that appear to have the loose

arrangement of buildings typical on American farms prove when studied to reflect the divided farmyard characteristic of Gudbrandsdalen, the region in Norway from which most of the immigrants in the area came” (Nelson 1994: viii). Norwegian culture underlying overt American culture is a general theme of this project; architecture is a surrogate to understanding how Norwegian-Americans retained their Norwegian heritage while also becoming uniquely American in their own way.

Public records provide a framework for understanding the landscapes that we study. We use plat books and familial maps to provide valuable information regarding the ownership and demographic makeup of the landscape. Further, the archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society and The Dane County Historical Society are rich with resources that aid this project. Travelers accounts, land records, photographs, and county histories are used to glean a narrative from places in time. These are analyzed carefully not only for the information included within them but for that which is left out. Sources such as county histories “may have been swayed by either the ego or pocketbook (or both)” of those who commissioned their production (Schein 2010: 233). Although useful, certain documents, such as census records and property deeds, can be difficult to obtain or interpret and must often be supplemented by other sources (Schein 2010: 236). In this way, combining public records with personal narratives and architecture analysis has been very valuable to our research. Deborah Dixon writes that “the meaning associated with a signifier can only be understood as part of a broader, relation system of meanings” (Dixon: 394). This means that our findings are better supported by corroborating evidence outside of the individual artifact or person in question.

We also examine Norwegian-American religious artifacts, including church altars and gravestones. Norwegian-American settlers created altars using whatever means they had

available. Kristen M. Anderson thus writes in her essay *Altars in the Norwegian-American Church: An Opportunity for Folk Expression* that “these circumstances added immeasurably to the richness and ultimate artistic significance of Norwegian-American church art” (K. Anderson 1994: 223). Altars and other church artifacts offer insight into Norwegian-American culture, both in the nineteenth century and today. Norwegian-American cemeteries also bear analysis. Raitz and Mather, in discussing German gravestones, note that “Although only two German families lived in the neighborhood in 1968, almost one third of the gravestones had German surnames” (Raitz and Mather 1971: 695). The connection between cemeteries and culture is unique; we will examine that connection more closely. Richard V. Francaviglia posits that cemeteries are important because they help to bridge the gap between subconscious and conscious motivation in the manipulation of form and space (Francaviglia 1971: 509).

Bias and Limitations

We are limited by the amount of time that we have to complete our research. Our investigation is not all-encompassing, and we have likely missed potentially useful information. We accept this limitation, and trust that our primary data will be representative of the population that we make our conclusions about. We are also limited by our lack of funding. We have been limited to library and archival research, and one research trip each to the Koshkonong settlement and the town of Perry. Our limitations are one of the main reasons why we choose to focus on Dane County. However, we believe this limitation actually has benefits, as Dane County has not been as thoroughly researched as other Norwegian settlements within the state, such as Coon Valley.

Because we are, ourselves, products of the very cultural synthesis that we are researching, we must acknowledge the bias inherent in that. As American researchers, but none of us with

Norwegian heritage, our identity has informed the conclusions and interpretations that we make. Bruce L. Rhoads and David Wilson write that “human geographers recognize that the knowledge they advance through informed observation is hopelessly bound up with the assumptions, theories, and predilections involved in the research act” (Rhoads and Wilson: 39). Although, on an individual level, we believe that there are benefits to living in the contemporary multicultural space of Dane County, we have attempted to not draw conclusions in our research that presume that the community we are studying shared our view. Furthermore, in an attempt to be as varied as possible in the scale of our project, we will have no doubt given more attention than is perhaps warranted to some documents or personal stories, which will effect the final analysis presented here. This being said, we contend that narrative which follows is as faithful to the documents that we studied as possible and will provide the reader with a fair assessment of the history and geography of the Norwegian-American immigrant community in Dane County.

Contextualizing Norwegian Immigration to Dane County

Push Factors

There are numerous and sometimes competing perspectives on why Norwegians left their homeland for America beginning in the nineteenth century. Ann Marie Legreid argues that religious discord in Norwegian society provided the ground work for eager peasants to seek opportunities outside of Norway. Revivals sprung up in different layers of society, from the peasantry to the clergy, challenging the state Church of Norway (Legreid 1997: 302). Yet some historians reject the role of religion in causing emigration from Norway. “It seems clear that Norwegians did not emigrate primarily because they were oppressed, or persecuted, or poverty-stricken” (Munch 1954: 7). The numerous revivals, however, suggest that religious tensions in

Norway were at a high throughout the nineteenth century. Furthermore, Legreid does not suggest that religious oppression directly caused emigration from Norway as it did in other European countries, but only that “in this atmosphere of ecclesiastic struggle, Norwegians left in large numbers for America” (Legreid 1997: 302). Thus, the religious context of Norway should not be ignored when exploring the causes of Norwegian emigration.

The changing demographics of Europe in the nineteenth century also played a role in emigration. Norway was the first country in Europe to experience a significant decline in mortality rates in the early nineteenth century (Ostergren and Rice 2004: 87). Yet before birth rates could follow in suit, the population of Norway doubled between 1815 and 1865 (Munch 1954: 5). The already limited available land in Norway proved insufficient for the vastly growing population. Although over half of Norwegians in the nineteenth century cultivated the land to support themselves and their families, three quarters of the land area of Norway cannot be cultivated due to its mountainous topography (Qualey 1938: 10). Furthermore, the majority of the available land is forested (Qualey 1938: 7). The literature of the 1850s and 60s reflects the growing restlessness and desire to leave ones homeland in search of greater material opportunities (Haugen 1954: 6). Bjornson, a Norwegian novelist, in 1859 wrote:

“Out would I, out- oh, so far, far, far

Over the highest mountains.

Wherever I turn, my path they bar” (Haugen 1954: 6).

The growing population had a huge impact on the economic landscape of both agrarian Norway, and industrial Norway after the industrial revolution. Odd S. Lovoll posits that in the 1830s, “impoverishment occurred in all parts of the country... and caused the bottom stratum of Norwegian society to grow faster than other social groups. Large segments of the population

were looking for better opportunities wherever they might exist” (Lovoll 1998: 10). As the population exploded, the lack of available work pushed people to emigrate to America, where labor was relatively plentiful.

Pull Factors

New opportunities to acquire land in the expanding territory of the United States helped to alleviate the land shortages. In the 1830s the completion of the Federal Land Survey, the establishment of land offices in Mineral Point, Green Bay and Milwaukee, and the removal of Native American land rights provided easy access to land. Norwegians were among the first to arrive in Wisconsin, primarily settling at first in “Jefferson Prairie, Rock Prairie, Muskego and Koshkonong” (Ostergren 1997: 153). From this early period, settlements grew and spread so that by the time of the 1870 census, 35 percent of total population of Wisconsin were foreign born, more than forty thousand of whom were Norwegian (Zeidel 2003: 7). Lovoll notes that “by the 1840s Wisconsin had become the center of Norwegian-American life and retained this position up to the Civil War” (Lovoll 1998: 11).

Further, “Norwegians were deeply stirred by the call of American opportunity.... It was commonly said that they suffered from ‘American fever’” (Munch 1954: 1). Personal correspondence and advertisements alike called Norwegians to the United States, promising opportunities for not only land but employment. It quickly turned into a self-perpetuating craze: “Those who arrived first sent word back encouraging others to follow. The result was the creation of streams of migration that brought large numbers of people of specific geographic origins to Wisconsin” (Ostergren 1997: 151). Since Wisconsin was a hub of Norwegian-American immigration, and this was a popular method of bringing new immigrants to America,

it is easy to see why Wisconsin remained the premier locale for Norwegian-Americans for decades of the nineteenth century.

It is prudent to consider that neither push nor pull happened in a vacuum. Lovoll asserts that “The ebb and flow of migration can be explained by an interplay of domestic and international economic circumstances, by depression or economic expansion on either side of the Atlantic... it was a voluntary act; conditions and possibilities on both sides of the ocean were considered, and an effective communication network kept people informed” (Lovoll 1998: 10). An economic equilibrium was established between Norway and America, and areas of high pressure inevitably filtered into areas of low pressure as economic need dictated.

Life in America and the Norwegian Lutheran Church

Beginning in 1840, Norwegian immigrants left their early settlements in Rock and Waukesha counties in Wisconsin and pushed westward to Dane County. Many made their homes in the southeastern portion of the county, along Koshkonong Creek. By 1850, the Koshkonong settlement expanded to include 12 townships within both Dane and neighboring Jefferson counties with a population of 2,670 (Legried 1986: 5-3).

Norwegian immigrants established churches as places of worship and comfort in a harsh environment. A study of the Norwegian-American Lutheran Church allows an understanding of the changing and reshaping of Norwegian culture that occurred as a result of immigration to America. The church served as an anchor for newly formed immigrant communities (Legreid 1997: 300). However, conflicts within the church also shed light on how the Norwegian immigrants adapted to their new homeland (Gjerde 1986: 681). Many scholars approach the topic of the church to explore how Norwegian immigrants in America created a uniquely Norwegian-American culture. We now examine the East Koshkonong, West Koshkonong,

Hauge Log, Perry, and East Blue Mounds churches as products and producers of the built environment of the immigrants.

The East and West Koshkonong Lutheran Churches

As Norwegian settlers migrated westward from Rock and Waukesha counties, Koshkonong became a crucial point in the Norwegian landscape. It became known as the “Queen of Norwegian-American settlements” (G. Anderson 1969: 2) as well as the “wealthiest and most widely known Norwegian settlement in America” (R. Anderson 1894: 8). As time went on,, Koshkonong was referred to as “the gateway” for Norwegians heading to Wisconsin’s western frontier” and many settlements in western Wisconsin could “trace direct linkages back to earlier settled areas” (Osterger 1997: 153). Peter Munch also notes that several settlements in the Coon Valley area formed through expansion of the Koshkonong settlement (Munch 1949: 781). And yet, despite the prosperity in the settlement, in 1844 there was not a single ordained Lutheran minister in Koshkonong, and no congregations had been formed (G. Anderson 1969: 2-3).

The Founding and Construction of the East and West Koshkonong Churches

The story of the founding of the Lutheran churches in the western and eastern portions of the Koshkonong settlement in eastern Dane County begins with a single man, Reverend Johannes Wilhelm Christian Dietrichson. Dietrichson was ordained in Norway in 1844 and travelled to America in May of the same year with the intent of establishing “a permanent church order” among Norwegian immigrants (G. Anderson 1969: 3). On 30 August and 1 September 1844, Dietrichson held his first sermon in the eastern part of the Koshkonong settlement on the farm of Amund Andersen. The next day he travelled to west Koshkonong where he again

conducted services, this time under two oak trees on the farm of Knud Aslaksen Juve (fig 1), (G. Andersen 1969: 4). There are conflicting stories about the role that these oak trees played in the service. In “Eminent Pioneers”, Ylvisaker writes “As long as the oaks were left standing, visitors were shown the mark of a cross on one of the trunks -- the preacher cut it there with a jackknife - - which had served very well as an impromptu altar painting in the wilderness” (Ylvisaker 1934: 17). Others say that “deep niches were cut in the oaks to provide support for the communion table and as a result the trees died” (Western Koshkonong 2010).

That October, Dietrichson returned to Koshkonong settlement. On 10 October 1844, he returned to the farm of Amund Anderson and on 19 October to the farm of Knud Aslaksen Juve. Although he visited both the east and west end of the Koshkonong settlement, his goal in these meetings was to organize a single congregation, divided into two parishes to ensure each member of the congregation had regular access to services. Dietrichson asked both the east and the west groups the following four questions which he believed the people of Koshkonong should voluntarily agree to before the congregation could be formed:

“--Do you desire to become a member of the Norwegian Lutheran congregation at this place?

--Will you to that end subject yourself to the church order that the Ritual of the Church of Norway Prescribes?

--Will you promise that you shall not call or accept any other minister or pastor than such as can clearly establish according to the Norwegian Lutheran Church Order that he is a regularly called and rightly consecrated pastor? And will you show the pastor thus called by you and the congregation to spiritual rulership the attention and obedience that a

member of a congregation owes his pastor in all things that he requires and does according to the Ritual of the Church of Norway?

--Will you, by signing your name or by permitting it to be signed, here make acknowledgement that you have joined the congregation on the above named conditions?" (G. Anderson, 1969: 4).

The Koshkonong settlers enthusiastically agreed, and in October 1844 the Norwegian Lutheran congregation on Koshkonong Prairie in Dane and Jefferson Counties, Wisconsin Territory, North America was formed (G. Anderson 1969: 4).

The congregation immediately set about the task of building places of worship. Dietrichson and the congregation found it unacceptable to meet in "the small and wretched huts that these people call homes" (G. Anderson 1969: 4). They needed a space that honored their faith. Work proceeded quickly on the church and by 19 December 1844, the western parish had completed the first Norwegian American Lutheran church structure in North America (R. Anderson 1895: 8). In January of the following year the eastern parish completed their work. The East and West Koshkonong churches were nearly identical (fig. 2). Both were "36 feet long and 28 feet wide" structures with simple furnishings and adornments (R. Anderson 1894: 8). These first churches were wooden, made with logs gathered when clearing the land. Though it is difficult to tell from the sketch in figure 2, it appears that the pioneers constructed their churches using uniquely Norwegian techniques. Rather than using chinking to seal the gaps between each log, "logs were carefully cupped and fitted over each other to make a tight joint" (Perrin 1965: 13). The pioneers created a space for worship in America using methods that they had learned in Norway and in doing so they differentiated themselves from other settlers. These first churches were visibly Norwegian, if only in the context of the American frontier. After visiting Norwegian

settlements in America, the Counsel General in Norway commented on the appearance of the church in his report, saying that the “church’s appearance resembled a barn, but the inside was neat and tasteful” (Ylvisaker 1934: 17). The church may have indeed been barn like, but it represented the culmination of the pioneer’s hard work, sacrifice and desire to practice their faith. All members of the congregation participated in its construction. Many farmers provided materials for the church’s construction while those who did not have the means donated their labor (Ylvisaker 1934: 18).

Growth and Rebuilding

In May 1850, Dietrichson left Koshkonong to return to Norway. He was replaced by A.C. Preus who arrived in Koshkonong in July of 1850 (G. Anderson 1969: 9). Shortly after his arrival he proposed a synod, on which he worked with eighteen other congregations until the constitution was completed in 1853 (G. Anderson 1969: 9). During this same time period it became clear that the East and West Koshkonong congregations had outgrown their original churches. The east congregation constructed a new stone church in 1858 (fig. 3). The cost of its construction was \$3000. There is limited documentation about the interior of the stone church. A pamphlet published by the East Koshkonong Lutheran Church to celebrate its 145th anniversary provides this description: “Inside the west side entrance was a stairway to the choir loft, the pulpit was centered on the east wall, and wood burning stoves heated the building” (Bovre and Christensen 1989). At West Koshkonong church, one recalled that the congregation had grown so large that during communion they had to “sing all 47 verses of the hymn before all the communicants had been served” (G. Anderson 1969: 9). The congregation made plans to build a new church, large enough to accommodate 1000 worshipers. Its location was important. According to Bjornstjerene Bjoernson, a church should be located on a hill to signify “both a

high regard for the church and also the fact that from time immemorial the Norwegians have insisted that the house of God must stand on a hill” (Ylvisaker 1934: 21).

Since the original church was ideally located, the new church was to be constructed on the same hill, and situated in its precise location. Construction began in earnest, however having a place to worship was so important to these pioneers that they built the new church around the existing one. Walls of brick were built around the little log church, once they were complete the old church could come down. One parishioner, Mrs. Balker, recalls that “The crew took down the logs one by one, and passed them through the doors and windows of the brick church” (Ylvisaker 1934: 21). The new church was built in the shape of an octagon (fig. 4), an architectural style that Richard Perrin deems faddish. Yet he notes that “as one of the significant movements of the mid-nineteenth century, it marked the beginning of inventional and experimental architecture. This style sought to organize and enclose space for particular needs according to reason and logic instead of inherited tradition alone” (Perrin 1965: 25-26). This unique design did not have its roots in Norway, as the design of the early log churches did, but rather could be found throughout Wisconsin. Perrin’s book *Wisconsin Architecture* examines several octagonal structures, none of which were built by Norwegian immigrants. (Perrin 1965: 25-26). The construction of the octagonal church represents a moment in time when the Norwegian pioneers at Koshkonong began to explore and display their identity as Norwegian Americans. The octagon church was completed in 1852 and cost between \$5000 to \$6000. It was made of “red brick, with white trimmings around the windows and green shutters on the bell tower” (Jordan 1942). Each wall was thirty feet long and twenty three feet tall, giving the congregation about 4500 square feet of space to worship in (G. Anderson 1969: 10).

In 1893, fearing that the building had become unsafe and unable to find a contractor willing to make the necessary repairs, the congregation decided to tear down the church and build a new one. As before, the new West Koshkonong church was constructed with the help of the congregation. This time the parishioners raised money and donated items such as chandeliers, while other items, like the baptismal font from the old church were reused (G. Anderson 1969: 17). The church was completed and the first service was held less than a year after the octagon church was demolished, on 24 December 1893 (G. Anderson 1969: 17). Since its completion, the church has undergone a great deal of renovation (figs. 5 & 6). In 1968 the church was renovated and an addition was added to the church (G. Anderson 1969: 19). Figure 3 shows the church as it stood in 1925. The addition can be seen in figure 4, extending to the right from behind the steeple. Also note that trees have been planted alongside the front walkway, obscuring the view of the entrance.

Schism within the Koshkonong Churches

Rather than open its own seminary, the Koshkonong churches chose to instead send its students to the Lutheran seminary in Concordia, Missouri. But the outbreak of the Civil War in the early 1860s caused the Concordia seminary to close. As a result, Koshkonong students returned to Wisconsin, bringing with them what they had learned in the South. The Missouri Synod was conservative and interpreted the scriptures in a literal way, much differently than the Koshkonong congregation. The Missouri educated group also did not believe that slavery was a sin, unlike the Lutherans at Koshkonong. These differences culminated in the 1880s with the controversy over predestination. The predeterminist Missouri Synod taught that before God created the world, He had already determined the fate of everything in it. Much of the Koshkonong congregation not taught at Concordia Seminary believed instead that God “elected

those who he foresaw would believe in Christ through the power of his word and spirit” (G. Anderson 1969: 14). The Koshkonong congregation was divided. Reverend Jacob Aall Ottesen led the predeterminist debate which was met with great opposition, resulting in three court cases in which the State Supreme Court sided with the anti-Missourians (G. Anderson 1969: 16-17). In the end, Ottesen “urged his followers to reorganize immediately and rebuild, which they did (Lee 1975: 10). Their new church would be located on top of a hill one half mile away from the original church in west Koshkonong. This new church was incorporated on 1 October 1891 and at this time the cornerstone which reads “Den Norske Synodes Lutherske Kirke” was laid (fig 7). On 27 May 1892, the new church on the hill was finished and dedicated (Lee 1975: 11). Figure 8 shows the church as it was originally. That same year the interior was painted and carpet was installed in the chancel and the aisle. Two years later, in 1925, the church had electric lights installed throughout the church (Lee 1975: 12-13). No further renovations are recorded until 1961 when restrooms were installed in the basement. This was also the year that the exterior of the church was renovated by enlarging the narthex, or entryway. This was dedicated in 1961 “in connection with the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the congregation” (Lee 1975: 13). Figure 10 shows this addition, which juts out from the front of the church and displays a stained glass window. In 1974 all of the stained glass windows were supplied with protective coverings as can be seen in figure 10 (Lee 1975: 14). This church displays several proclamations which declare the congregations’ ethnic affiliation. The cornerstone (fig. 7), which is written in Norwegian, proclaims that the church is a member of the Norwegian Synod Lutheran Church. It is situated on the left side of the building and is obscured by several bushes. Much more prominent is the stained glass window on the entrance which simply reads “Western Koshkonong Lutheran Church”.

During this time period the East Koshkonong church was entangled in the same controversy over predestination. In 1893, the congregation erected the First East Koshkonong Church, just to the west of the stone church (fig 11). As can be seen in figures 11, 12, 13 and 14, little has changed architecturally through the years. It appears that the church has been resided in brick since the 1894 photo was taken, but renovation records regarding the east churches are scarce, and so no exact date can be given. The stained glass windows of the church have either been retained or reproduced as well. The only notable change in the First East Koshkonong church is that of landscaping, which now obscures ones view of the entrance.

In 1897, the old stone church was also torn down. The congregations' new church was to be modeled after the Gamle Vestre Aakershus Kirke in Norway. According to the 145th anniversary pamphlet of the church, the quarry stone from the original church was reused in the construction of the basement of the new place of worship (East Koshkonong Church 1989). As seen in the construction of previous churches, much of the congregation contributed volunteer labor to the building process. The completed church (fig 15) has undergone some renovation, but as was the case with the First East Koshkonong church, very little written record exists. Figure 15 shows that the entrance to the church has been expanded, and the original doors on either side of the new entrance have been closed off. Also note that in constructing the new entrance, an effort has been made to retain the look of the original church by placing windows of the approximate same size and shape on either side of the door.

Written record about this time period is hardly needed as the landscape surrounding these churches offers information about how deeply this conflict affected the congregations. One only needs to examine the headstones in the cemetery. At the original West Koshkonong Church is the gravestone of Knud Aslaksen Juve, the farmer whose oak trees served as a meeting place for

the young congregation (fig. 16). At the new church on the hill, the gravestone of Aslak K. Juve (fig. 17) can be found showing that this divided not only the congregation, but the families who participated in it. Likewise, at the eastern church sites, a historical marker has been placed between the two churches describing the history and conflict that took place in the Koshkonong settlement (fig. 18). The churches remained in conflict until 1917, when the Haugean, Norwegian Lutheran and United Lutheran synods merged to form the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America (Legried 1986: 13-12).

In his article, *Conflict and Community: A Case Study of the Immigrant Church in the United States*, about a case study of the evolution of the Norwegian Lutheran Church in the Crow River settlement in Minnesota, Jon Gjerde acknowledges the importance of the church in providing comfort to newly arrived immigrants. Citing non-Norwegian national or regional instances of conflict revolving around the church, he establishes the pattern of the church as a source of community and a source of conflict within the communities. Such a pattern infiltrates immigrant communities as well. Referencing other historians, Gjerde criticizes the lack of attention paid to theological schism within immigrant churches and structures his argument of theological schism within the Norwegian Lutheran Church in Norwegian-American immigrant settlements. He situates these conflicts within the more complex and fluid process of community building. It is his contention that within this context, these overarching theological debates within the conservative Norwegian Synod gave rise to the uniquely Norwegian-American Lutheran Church. Gjerde further contends that this new church, having diverged from its conservative roots, was more in tune with the democratic ideals of American society (Gjerde 1986: 681-682).

Ann Marie Legreid also studies Norwegian-American settlement, community building, and conflict in the Lutheran Church, taking a geographic approach focusing on schism in four Norwegian settlements in Wisconsin (Legreid 1997: 301). Legreid, however, begins her work by exhausting the structure of the Lutheran Church in Norway and exploring the tensions brewing within it (Legreid 1997: 304). This proves useful as America, a secularized and democratic nation, provided the necessary conditions for the newly settled immigrants to express their frustrations with the state Church of Norway.

It is necessary to categorize the Norwegian-American immigrant populations to know who, when, and what circumstances drove the changes within the church. Both Legreid and Gjerde formulate their arguments by noting how generation, time of arrival to America, and regional origin in Norway are all factors that affected where the lines of conflict were drawn. Legreid structures her argument by allocating a paragraph to each factor driving change within the church. She also clearly differentiates between early settlers as those who arrived before 1870 and late settlers as those who arrived after 1870 (Legreid 1997: 314). Her categories are useful as she looks at time of arrival, data compiled by referring to the local congregational registers, which reveals the pattern that early settlers tended to remain within the Norwegian Synod and the later settlers tended to break off from the conservative State Church (Legreid 1997: 316). Gjerde conclusions, however, are unclear, as he categorizes the immigrants by early and late settlers, but neglects to define which years constitute these two periods.

Gjerde and Legreid argue that these conflicts did not disintegrate the identity or meaningfulness of the Norwegian Lutheran Church but rather changed the theology to better suit the evolving Norwegian-American culture. "Whereas conflict in immigrant communities created bitterness, it worked to redefine cultural and theological meaning in the new American

environment” (Gjerde 1986: 693). The Norwegian-American Lutheran Church functions as an artifact of the old country redefined to provide support and community, and to serve as a vehicle for cultural expression for the Norwegian-Americans populations residing in America.

The Hauge and Perry Norwegian Lutheran Churches

Norwegian settlers of the Perry region in southwestern Dane County built two churches to suit their needs: The Hauge Log Church and the Perry Lutheran Church. Both of these churches are inextricably tied into the history of the region. Due to changes that both of these churches went through in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they were in constant need of re-imagining. Each time either of these churches transformed in use or in structure provides a valuable window into the motivations, beliefs, and values of those who decided how the transformation was to take place. These churches allow an intimate view of the cultural changes that the settlers experienced over time.

The Founding of the Hauge Log Church (1848-1852)

According to the 1915 historical book *Sixty Years of Perry Congregation* by C. O. Ruste, some Norwegian immigrants came from other American settlements, but the vast majority came directly from Norway (Ruste 1915: 18). The first church in the area was built in the town of Perry, south of the Blue Mounds of western Dane County. This church was called the Hauge Log Church. A historical marker outside of the side of the church reads: “Early Norse pioneers who realized the need for a house of worship built the first Norwegian Lutheran Church in western Dane County from logs in the winter of 1851-1852” (fig. 26). Members of the community decided very early on that it was extremely important to have a physical manifestation of their

religious beliefs. In the face of hunger and disease, these early settlers erected the Hauge Log Church.

The Hauge Log Church was built a short four years after the very first Norwegian settlers began moving into the area. At this period in the lives of the immigrants, there was a very fine line between life and death -- the number of gravestones from the 1850s in the Perry Church cemetery is a testament to this (fig. 27). Notice that the majority of the people listed on the mass grave are children that died only a few years apart from each other. Knudt Thompson, a Norwegian settler in Perry, recalls the hardship of this time: "There is nobody living today of the younger generation that can visualize what the first settlers had to go through in this country both in cold and frost and in poverty and with God's help it has gone good till today" (Thompson 1899: 5).

The Hauge Log Church was tiny, and yet the entire community took part in building it. "The dimensions of the church were to be 20x20 [feet], and it was also agreed that each settler should cut and draw a certain number of logs, and help gratuitously to erect the church" (Ruste 1915: 31). The first service was held on 27 May 1852 (fig. 26). Knudt Thompson describes the building of the church in his diary: "We took our axes and went out and chopped, everyone took twenty or thirty logs and hauled them out. And then we set a day to go together and build it" (Thompson 1899: 3). It did not matter how much one had to spare: one spared it for the good of the church. It was a symbol of cultural and religious importance that took priority over the gathering of wood for one's own fireplace. Indeed, most of the data that is available about the early years of the Perry settlement comes from one source: the Perry Historical Center housed in the current Perry Lutheran Church. Without the context of the church, scholarly research about the beginnings of the Perry settlement would be very difficult.

Though it was only a site of burials for a short period and many of the gravestones have been removed, there are still a number of graves outside the site of the original Hauge Log Church. The certificate of acceptance into the National Register of Historic Places for the Hauge Log Church reads that “The earliest grave dates from 1852 and contains the remains of Arne Ruste who cut the first log used in building the church” (Hauge Log 2010). His grave is unreadable to us today; the Norwegian inscriptions have faded with age. However, it has been endowed with a new stone marking in front of the old one (fig. 28). Changes in design and aesthetics that have taken place since the original gravestone was created are evident when comparing the two. The new design is low to the ground with ornate designs encircling the words “Valdres Norway” as well as other English language text. The fact that somebody took the time to fashion a new gravestone in the first place also reflects the personal beliefs that current residents hold about their Norwegian ancestry. Much like the building which needed to be refinished in 1927, the original grave has long since faded and become illegible (fig. 28). However, people can still enjoy the historical significance of both because they have each been faithfully restored.

Dissent and Schism (1852-1854)

In the 1800s, the issue of predestination became a major source of conflict within the Norwegian Lutheran Church. The Norwegian Synod in America kept close ties with the conservative State Church of Norway back home. The Synod’s affiliation with the Missourian doctrine, which advocated predestination, reflects these close ties. Members of the congregations throughout Norwegian settlements in America, however, sided with the Anti-Missourian doctrine against predestination. It was along these lines that the schism occurred. Ann Marie Legreid explores the discourse of the break by analyzing 400 pages of minutes from congressional

debates over the issue (Legreid 1997: 309-311). This approach ensured maximum accuracy, although it gave her freedom to select which excerpts to include in her article to shape the material as needed for her work. Jon Gjerde also uses primary data to better understand the demographics of schism, relying on plat books and Lutheran Church records and tax records from Crow County for his article (Gjerde 1986: 695).

Not long after the cooperative building of the Hauge Log Church, a schism developed between its churchgoers. C. O. Ruste describes how the Hauge Log Church became unfit for the needs of the town: “Those who were committed to change before they left Norway... favored an informal, so-called ‘low-church’ style.... Some people with no previous inclination to this style of worship... undoubtedly became comfortable with this new way of worship and associated it with their new lives in a new place” (Perry Historical 1994: 189). In November 1854, two years after the founding of the Hauge church, those who disagreed with this style of worship decided to break off of the church that they had built with their own bare hands, and found a new church:

“People who had immigrated in order to pursue a traditional way of life no longer possible for them in an over-populated and industrializing Norway -- people for whom immigration was a conservative rather than a progressive act -- favored a formal, liturgical, ‘high-church’ style.... They wanted to recreate, as closely as possible, the State Church of Norway in this new place” (Perry Historical 1994: 189).

Religious practice and ritual changed so profoundly as to cause a rift between traditional Norwegian Lutheranism and anti-Missourian Lutheranism. This speaks to the uses of religion in early Norwegian-American society. For the people who rejected the liturgical style of the State Church, religion seemed to be strictly an exercise in expressing their faith in God, with less

emphasis on ritual. These immigrants placed emphasis on being religious, whatever that meant in their new life away from Norway. Here, we see first-generation Norwegian-Americans making a conscious choice to no longer be traditional Norwegians, and to be Norwegian-Americans. This ability to change and react to new surroundings has informed the American cultural landscape as a whole, and it is this spirit that we see in the Haugean churchgoers.

There were also some concrete examples besides the form of worship that suggested a break from traditional Norwegian culture. Clara Jacobson recalls in her diary *Childhood Memories* that “there was a tendency to Americanize the names, when according to old Norwegian custom babies were named after grand parents. Accordingly, only the first letter in their names was used, when they sounded too foreign” (Jacobson: 21). One’s name is a crucially important part of one’s identity, and that people were willing to change the spelling of their naming schema as soon as ten years after settling in Wisconsin supports the notion that the Haugeans were willing to compromise their Norwegian identities in favor of becoming Norwegian-Americans.

Sixty Years of Perry Congregation, a book written by Perry congregation members who supported the “high-church”, refers to the Haugean style of worship as “holding in contempt the liturgical forms of worship, and also tending strongly toward an extravagant subjectivism, giving undue importance to the testimony of personal experience in spiritual things” (Ruste 1915, 35). Haugeans themselves saw it differently. Because they were already disposed to be less rigid and formal than their counterparts, they took a more accepting approach to the matter. Knudt Thompson, a Haugean, writes in his diary: “There became some misunderstanding between the Hauge and the Norwegian Synod but there was a little difference in the belief and in the learning. They couldn’t get together” (Thompson 1899: 4). It is clear that the people who wanted to break

up the congregations were those who wished to continue their association with the Church of Norway.

The Infancy of the Perry Evangelical Lutheran Church (1854-1878)

Those who did not participate in the anti-Missourian style that the Haugeans were exploring in the 1850s still needed a place to worship. Those people who risked their livelihoods and their families' well-being a mere two years earlier found it necessary to strike out again; to take the same risk that they had all survived the first time around. For these settlers, religion was not just about a belief in God. They were not ready to fully embrace the new American lifestyle. As the above quote says, they wanted to recreate the State Church of Norway in Perry. Religion, for these people, was a way of connecting to, and keeping with, the traditional culture of the place that they still called home. They wanted Perry to be as close to Norway as possible, and making sure their style of worship did not evolve was one way of doing this.

The Perry Lutheran Church was built both as a house of worship, and as a hearkening back to traditional Norwegian culture. Construction of the church did not start until 1856, and the dedication was not held until 1861, but the plaque in front on the church still reads "Perry Norwegian Lutheran Church, Organized Nov. 5, 1854" (fig. 29). This speaks to the true nature and intention behind the building of the Perry church. Most structures display the year they were completed, if they say at date at all. For example, there is a plaque still on the old Hauge Log Church which says "1852 Hauge Log Church" (fig. 30); recall that this was the year when the church was completed. Instead, the Perry church displays the date that it was organized, rather than completed, because the important thing was not the building itself. (fig. 29) That the Hauge Log Church displays the year that it was completed informs that the purpose of building the church was quite simply to have a place to express their faith in God, and nothing more.

Alternatively, the idea behind the Perry church was what mattered; it was an oath among its founders to idealistically retain as much of their traditional Norwegian heritage as they possibly could. There was to be a concerted effort to remain decidedly Norwegian in America, as opposed to becoming Norwegian-American. Further, services were held at the site of the Perry church well before the church was finished being built: *Sixty Years of Perry Congregation* claims “the first service in the stone church was held Christmas day, 1858” (Ruste 1915: 61), three years before the dedication of the building took place. This signifies, again, that the most important thing was the idea and attitudes behind the church, rather than the church itself. They did not even wait to have the building fully completed to begin worship there.

Despite this, the Perry Lutheran Church was much bigger than the Hauge Log Church, and from the start it attempted to duplicate the State Church of Norway as much as possible. *The Historic Perry Norwegian Settlement* reports that “in 1865, the Perry Congregation officially affiliated [itself] with the Church of Norway’s American arm, the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Synod of America (usually referred to as the Norwegian Synod)” (Perry Historical 1994: 192). Further, in keeping with the desire to exist as a branch of the State Church of Norway, they decided to hire a “Christiania University trained, ordained in Norway Pastor” (Perry Historical 1994: 191). The Norwegian Lutheran churches at Springdale, Blue Mounds, and Vermont joined together to hire a Norwegian pastor, Peter Marius Brodahl. “People came from far and near to witness his installation. This was fitting because Pastor Brodahl was not only going to minister the four congregations which had called him, but also serve as a ‘circuit rider’ to as many as 21 other congregation spread throughout southwestern Wisconsin” (Perry Historical 1994: 191).

Times for these settlers were very difficult, yet those who yearned for a continuation of their life in Norway were willing to give what little they had just so they could have a real Norwegian pastor only part of the time. For these newly-minted Perry members, having anything that tied them back to their Norwegian roots was a great comfort. However, no matter how hard they tried, there was no escaping the fact that they no longer lived in Norway. They were trying to remain Norwegian despite living in America, but due to their circumstances they could not help but begin the transformation into Norwegian-Americans.

Another example of the dialectic between Norwegian sensibility and the reality of life on the frontier was the original altar that was used at the Perry Church. On the frontier, many people could not afford to adorn their church altars with anything expensive or out of the ordinary. And yet, churches and their altars remained as important an aspect of spirituality to these would-be Norwegians as their counterparts in Norway. Kristin M. Anderson writes in her essay *Altars in the Norwegian-American Church* that “The necessity for large quantities of altars around the turn of the century... opened doors... in the Norwegian-American community. These alternate sources included individuals who were on the margin of professional status and others not yet in that category... sometimes members of the congregation” (K. Anderson 1994: 209).

The Perry Church could not afford an expensive altar, so they had to make do with what they had available. The original Perry altar was simple; only one image appears to exist of it (fig. 31). This altar was handmade by people whose profession was clearly not altar-making. The cross is plain, wooden, whitewashed, and has a Norwegian phrase on it. The star above the cross is quite crude, and the Christmas decorations around the cross and star are clearly the work of amateurs (fig. 31). And yet, it did serve as the altar of a proudly Norwegian congregation whose primary concern was remaining as imperially Norwegian as possible. As with the hiring of the

Norwegian pastor, these settlers had to settle for the materials that they had available to them to define their spiritual and cultural identity. Though the intention was to recreate Norway in southwestern Dane, the end result was a distinctly Norwegian-American built environment.

The old Hauge Log Church, as one might expect, also created folk-altars, but the Haugeans embraced the amateurish nature of their altars - after all, their attitude was profoundly different than the members of the Perry congregation. Clara Jacobson recalls in her diary that “the interior of the church was very plain. We young girls in the congregation always liked to help make the church look festive. One Spring, I think it must have been for confirmation, father cut out of cardboard the letters for a scripture motto to be placed across the altar. The girls sewed blue violets on to cover them. The effect was beautiful” (Jacobson: 21). This recollection is a useful surrogate to understanding the role of the altar at the old Hauge Log Church, in contrast with its role at the Perry Church.

For the Haugeans, the altar was a blank canvas with which to adorn their beliefs and values of the day, whatever they may be. Even today, the altar of the Hauge Log Church is an extremely simple, with literally no adornments (fig. 32). If it was confirmation day, the altar would be nothing more than cardboard letters with blue violets sewed on. Haugeans would get a little more extravagant on Christmas, but still within the means of the congregation, and without ceremonial or cultural significance beyond the day that the churchgoers were celebrating. “One Christmas the whole church was draped with evergreens that grew on the bluffs nearby.... Very little of the trimmings was [sic] bought. Paper baskets and cornucopias were made by the girls and women. They strung popcorn and the strings were festooned all over the tree. The small candles in all colors made a fine display” (Jacobson: 21). As with the previous quote regarding confirmation decorations, Jacobson is strikingly satisfied with the meager and makeshift

decorations at the Hauge Log Church. Haugeans were entirely happy with their meager decorations. All they needed was a roof over their heads and simple adornments on the altar as they became necessary.

This comparison of altars at the Hauge and Perry churches is a microcosm of the respective congregations' existences in their new home. Haugeans, who were already predisposed to reject traditional Norwegian sensibility, were quick to let their culture come to them. Leading an entirely utilitarian lifestyle, their culture was a simple byproduct of their wants, fears, wishes, and simple beliefs about what is right and what is good. Thus the transition from Norwegians living in America to Norwegian-Americans was accidental, but entirely natural. In contrast, the Perry congregation made the transition into Norwegian-Americans despite their best efforts to remain strictly Norwegian. Through the necessities of life on the frontier, they were assimilated into their new culture without a choice in the matter.

Disaster and Re-imagining the Perry Church (1878-1937)

The Perry congregation operated in this manner until 1878, when the church building was destroyed. As Clara Jacobson write that the Perry Church “served the congregation for twenty years when it was wrecked by a cyclone on May 23rd, 1878” (Jacobson: 20). It was quickly decided that the Perry Lutheran Church was to be rebuilt. *Sixty Years of Perry Congregation* recalls that “after the first shock of this terrible storm had subsided, the congregation met and decided to rebuild the church with all possible haste” (Ruste 1915: 82). The town of Perry raised an estimated 5000 dollars to rebuild the church and add a new 132 foot steeple. The new structure was dedicated on 23 May 1881. Ruste offered this description of the new steeple. “As the church stands on a very high elevation, it can be seen from all parts of the congregation, pointing heavenward with its admonishing spire and spreading its blessed influence in all

directions” (Ruste 1915: 84). This statement reflects the new importance that some Perry residents gave to their 20 year old church. The church began in 1854 as a conceptual construct, a religious idea, but within two decades the building itself had become representative of the institution. This demonstrates the changing relationship between the ideologies of the members of the congregation and the physical structure of the church. Recall also that these are people who consider themselves particularly stalwart and unchanging in their beliefs; after all, they were the settlers whose actions were the most Norwegian in practice. Yet, as it is in the other cases, the Perry congregation was unwittingly making a cultural transformation into Norwegian-American.

At this time, the altar of the Perry Church was also renovated (fig. 33). This altar is clearly far more elaborate than the altar that had previously adorned the Perry Church. Also note that Norwegian inscription is conspicuously absent from this altar, compared to the original altar (fig. 32) This change in language reflects a transformation from stalwart Norwegian roots to a culture that is a synthesis of Norwegian and American beliefs and values. Because the new altar was far more elaborate than the original, historians attempting to chronicle the co-referential relationship between the church and its members are thrown off the scent of the all-important beginnings of the church, when the altar couldn’t help but be a hand-made, modest affair. With their new-found means to create an altar to their liking, the Perry congregation had successfully altered their environment to suit the culture that they wished to be a part of. The irony in all of this, however, is that if the members of the Perry congregation had the means to build a new altar that hides the frugal beginnings of their newly built society, it was only because they had embraced their new culture that they were becoming a part of.

The steeple of the Perry Lutheran Church was struck by lightning on 1 August 1888 and again on 30 November 1903. After the first lightning strike, a furnace was added to the church, and after the second lightning strike, the steeple was reconstructed in copper (Ruste 1915: 84-85). Much like the congregation itself, the church was being molded by the forces of nature in its home so as to become something different and uniquely American in form and function. The adding of modern amenities over time is an example of the ever-changing cultural dispositions of its congregation.

Finally, the church burned to the ground on 11 July 1935. The congregation met within a week of the fire and decided to rebuild the church. The original design was mostly followed “with few changes except enlarging the basement and adding an inside stairway” (Perry Historical 1994: 194). Upon rebuilding the church, the interior and altar took on an entirely new look (fig. 34). The new altar, which is still standing today, has a statue of Jesus in the middle, and the barrel-vaulted ceilings are now ribbed and have decorative trim. By this point the humble beginnings of the church are completely obscured, and overt signs of the history of the church are limited to the plaque outside of the church (fig. 29) and the old Norwegian gravestones (fig. 27).

The Hauge Log Church Post-Schism (1854-Present)

The original Hauge Log Church operated until 1887, when its members built a new church named the Hauge Evangelical Lutheran Church. This church thrived through the turn of the twentieth century and until the 1950s, when the parsonage began to dwindle due to a decrease in rural population. The church was leveled in 1981, and all that is left today is a stone marker (Perry Historical 1994: 191). The original Hauge Log Church remains standing today,

and has been refinished as a member of the National Register of Historic Places. A pamphlet found at the Hauge Log Church reads that:

“The old church gradually fell into disuse until 1926 when threats to relocate the building to a museum in another state resulted in an overwhelming response from the local community. Over \$1500 was raised to repair the church and it became one of the earliest repaired structures in Wisconsin. Over two thousand people gathered to attend the church’s 75th anniversary celebration in 1927” (Perry Hauge).

Restoring the new church has revitalized the site as a historic place, and now it is available for visitors and religious pilgrims to come and use for research, prayer, or other reflection at no charge. There is a guestbook today that has apparently existed for decades; Clara Jacobson recalls in her diary that “This old church has been restored. I visited it when I was back there many years ago and wrote my name in a register where many hundred had written their names before me. It was interesting to note names and place of residence. Many were not Norwegian and had come from as far away as New York” (Jacobson: 20). These reminiscences speak to the value of historical landmarks in the definition of a culture.

The site of the previously abandoned Hauge Log Church is very important to community members and historic church aficionados in general. Indeed, there even exists a discrete non-profit organization called The Perry Hauge Log Church Preservation Association, Inc. They operate strictly on donations, and their mission statement is “To preserve and protect the Hauge Log Church and its environs as a monument to the pioneers that settled the immediate area and the Blue Mounds settlement” (Perry Hauge). Going to historical sites is an important vehicle to understanding where a society came from, and what its values and beliefs were. By gaining this

knowledge, one gains a new perspective on the values and beliefs of the society that resulted from the history.

Concluding Statements About the Perry and Hauge Churches

Norwegian-Americans brought their strong sense of faith with them to Wisconsin, and their faith made its undeniable mark on nineteenth century Wisconsin. Odd S. Lovoll asserts that “parochial concerns affected Norwegians in America greatly in their patterns of settlement.... the strong Lutheran piety that prevailed in many Norwegian-American communities strengthened ethnocentric prejudices in the American environment and encouraged a segregated ethnic life” (Lovoll 1998: 3). That attitude has largely disappeared as pockets of ethnically homogeneous rural communities become less common in contemporary society.

However, even today the Norwegian Lutheran faith has a profound affect on the cultural heritage of Norwegian Americans: “for many Norwegian Americans a nearly symbiotic relationship between Lutheranism and Norwegian ethnicity continues in force” (Lovoll 1998: 4). Much like the 1881 altar of the Perry church that obliterated any overt knowledge of the humble original altar, a facade of simple American-ness gives one the impression that the Perry Church and its members were always the way that they are now. Yet it doesn’t take much digging to begin peeling back the layers of time to see how they got to the place they are today.

The members of the Perry congregation followed a cultural and developmental timeline which mirrored that of their church. Conveniently for historians, the building was forced to be rebuilt at many different intervals throughout the church’s history. Each time the churchgoers were forced to ask themselves what the purpose of a church was to them, and come up with an answer that was then literally set in stone, asking to be read by anybody who has the time or inclination. By analyzing the changes through time of the buildings that were continually known

as the Perry Lutheran Church, we can follow along with the mirrored changes in values, means, spirituality, and culture in its congregation that ultimately resulted in the unique tapestry that is today's American culture.

East Blue Mounds Lutheran Church and Community

An exploration of the details surrounding the rise and demise of the East Blue Mounds Lutheran Church illustrates how a community identifies with their ancestral culture changes through time. Gathering biographical data on specific families associated with the church and community, chronicling how English became the dominant language of the church, and the physical changes made to the church through time offer insight as to how the East Blue Mounds congregation and community expressed its Norwegian heritage on the landscape and, how the mode and vigor of expression has changed over the last century and a half to form the Norwegian-American culture we see today.

Early Settlement and the Church

Norwegian immigrants in Wisconsin first settled in Muskego, just west of Milwaukee. Settlers pushed westward traveling along roads built to connect military forts during the Black Hawk War (Blue Mounds 1952: 2). By 1846, Norwegian families settled in Blue Mounds of western Dane County. Norwegians tended to immigrate in coordination with other people from their town of origin in Norway (Gjerde 1986: 683). The majority of early settlers in Blue Mounds were from Valdres in south central Norway (Blue Mounds 1952: 2).

Among the early settlers in East Blue Mounds are:

“Mr. and Mrs. Ole Braaten

Mr. and Mrs. Neri Dahlen

Mr. and Mrs. Lars Dusterud

Mr. and Mrs. Ole Jelle

Mr. and Mrs. Syvert Lien

Mr. and Mrs. Bernt Lund

Mr. and Mrs. Thore Maanum

Mr. and Mrs. Christian Skogen

Mr. and Mrs. Knudt Syverud” (Blue Mounds 1952: 2-3).

In the years between arrival and the erection of the East Blue Mounds Church, the immigrants from Norway continued to actively practice their Lutheran faith, despite the obstacles accompanying the settlement process. Throughout the 1840 and early 50s, Blue Mounds did not have a resident pastor nor a proper church building to hold services in. In these years of early settlement, a pastor from Koshkonong would walk the substratal roads to Blue Mounds to provide essential services for the Norwegian immigrants. Pastor J.W.C. Dietrichsen, the first pastor from Norway to visit Blue Mounds, gave sermons and performed baptisms out in the open air (Blue Mounds 1952: 3). In the pamphlet prepared by the congregation in 1952 for the 100th anniversary of the East Blue Mounds Church, these early services are likened to satisfying needs such as thirst and hunger.

“Their babies were baptized in their own tongue, an ordained pastor from Norway has preached the gospel and pronounced the benediction...There was a new fire in their hearts.... Like parched throats that had found water, like hunger that had found food...Nothing that America ever gave them was appreciated as much as the word of God and the sacraments preached and administered in the new found homes of the Wisconsin wilderness” (Blue Mounds 1952: 3).

Pastor H.A. Stub performed the first organized service in July 1850 on the Sobjorn Dusterud farm (Blue Mounds 1952: 4). At the time of the 100th anniversary in 1952 the farm of this first service was owned by Russell Jelle, descendant from early settler Ole Jelle. Russel's son Dennis Jelle lives in Blue Mounds today with his family. By 1852 separate congregations formed in Blue Mounds, Springdale, and Perry and until 1856 these three towns shared a pastor. Pastor P.M. Brodahl became Blue Mound's first resident pastor in 1856 and resided on Nils K. Syverud's farm (Blue Mounds 1952: 17). As the Norwegian population in Blue Mounds continued to increase, the Lukken school house that doubled as the church proved too small for the growing congregation. In 1868 the congregation built the church on Barton Road in Blue Mounds. Roads surrounding the church are likely named after the Jelle, Barton and Syverud families previously mentioned, all whose patriarch's were born in Norway and immigrated to Blue Mounds in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Toponyms and Family Histories

Jelle Road, Barton Road, and Syvrud Road (spelling change will be discussed later) all lie within three miles of each other and the church. The graves of the earliest members of these families lay in the East Blue Mounds Cemetery where the church once stood; Mr. Ole Jelle 1824-1888, Mr. Knudt Syverud 1794-1869, and Mr. Ole Barton 1840-1921. Although no official document reveals which family or family member these roads are names after, the church records of early immigrants to Blue Mounds, the proximity of the graves to these roads, and researching the role of the families in the church suggest that these roads are named after the families Jelle, Barton, and Syverud.

Further research reveals the role of various family members of the Jelle, Barton, and Syverud families in the church, Blue Mounds and greater Dane County communities.

Biographical information on individuals illustrate how the community interacted with and adapted to their new homeland of America and serve as a proxy for understanding Norwegian settlement in America on a larger scale.

Barton Family and Barton Road

Ole Barton and his wife and were among the earliest Norwegian immigrants to settle in Blue Mounds. In 1866, after returning from serving in the Civil War, Ole Barton bought a farm in Primrose which he owned for twenty-five years and stayed in his family for a total of fifty-two years (Historical Primrose Farm 1919: 1). Various members of the La Follette family, close relatives of Wisconsin statesman Bob La Follette, owned the farm from 1849 to 1866 before selling it to Ole Barton (Historical Primrose Farm 1919: 1).

Ole Barton's son Albert O. Barton expressed his Norwegian American identity through his hobbies, professional life, and engagement with the Blue Mounds community. As a young man Albert O. Barton actively explored his heritage and was among the thirteen present at the founding of the Norse literary society, the Ygdrasil Society, in 1896 in the office of Professor Rasmus B. Anderson, professor of Norwegian Studies at the University of Wisconsin (Norse Literary Society 1922). Later, Barton worked as a newspaper writer and historian. He wrote various articles about the East Blue Mounds congregation and the Norwegian heritage of Wisconsin such as, "In the Old Days: Blue Mounds Norwegian Aid Society Celebrates Jubilee Anniversary" for the *Capital Times*, "The Old Muskego Settlement" for the *Waukesha Freeman*, and he also conducted a study on the history of the Norwegian press in America for the Wisconsin Historical Society (Milwaukee Journal 1917: 1). He held the position of city editor for the *Wisconsin State Journal* and was elected to the office of register of deeds of Dane County seven times (Evjue 1948: 410). While remaining in touch with his heritage, he also explored the

political landscape of Wisconsin and in 1909 worked as a clerk for Senator Bob La Follette and formed a close friendship with him (Evjue 1948: 410). Though he worked as a newspaper man and was considered a historian, he was a geographer at heart interested in the history and connections of people and place.

“It always seemed incongruous to see him making the rounds in a political campaign or taking care of his routine administrative duties in the courthouse when you knew that he would prefer to be out over the Wisconsin countryside, which he loved so well, wandering through some obscure cemetery gathering place names and historical clues. He was happiest when he engaged in this type of work or on some project connected with the Friends of Our Native Landscape” (Evjue 1948: 411).

These hobbies illustrate his interest in seeking out the various ways Norwegian heritage exerts itself on the landscape. Albert O. Barton epitomizes the Norwegian-American identity emerging at the turn of the century that continues to shape Dane County’s landscape and identity.

Other members of the Barton family participated in the East Blue Mounds church and community. In 1899 Mrs. Ole Barton, wife of Ole and mother of Albert, helped reorganize the Ladies Aid sector of the East Blue Mounds Church (Blue Mounds 1952: 23). Margaret Barton served as an organist for the East Blue Mounds Church and Mrs. Harland Barton worked on the committee for the 100th anniversary celebration for the congregation (Blue Mounds 1952: 18, 34).

Barton Road, the former location of the East Blue Mounds Church and current location of the East Blue Mounds cemetery, reflects the rich history of the Barton family in Dane County. By naming the street after the family, one can explore the ways in which Norwegian immigrants

and Norwegian Americans engaged with the land and community by looking at the origins of the street name.

Jelle Family and Jelle Road

Jelle Road, two miles south of Barton Road, was named after the family descending from Mr. and Mrs. Ole Jelle. The Jelle family bought the farm where the first church service was held and still own it today. Other members of the family remained active in the church until its destruction in the 1970s. Mrs. Ole Jelle was among the twenty-eight women who created the Ladies Aid faction of the East Blue Mounds congregation.

Throughout the pamphlet prepared for the 100th anniversary of the congregation, the Jelle family name occurs many times. Marie Jelle was the first treasurer of the Ladies Aid organization, as well as a charter member (23). The Ladies Aid society celebrated their 50th anniversary in 1933 emphasizing the history of the church and its early settlers (Barton 1933). The grandchildren of the earliest immigrants and founders of the Ladies Aid program prepared and played the music for the event (Barton 1933). The newspaper article about the event, written by Albert O. Barton, names Miss Annie Jelle and Mrs. Knut Jelle as two of the three original founders of the program still alive and in attendance for the 50th anniversary. The Ladies Aid program worked to cover the costs for improvements and renovations done to the church. They also raised money to help fund hospitals, orphanages, theological students, and to the poor in America and Norway; their new home and their place of origin (Barton 1933).

Miss Annie Jelle and Mrs. Benford Jelle were both later members of the aid program (Blue Mounds 1952: 24, 25). Marie Jelle Helland was an organist for the church (18). Mrs. Denford Jelle and Mrs. Dupont Jelle were both presidents of the Luther League at one point (30). Women marrying into and out of the Jelle name participated in the church significantly. Today

Mr. Russell Jelle is one of the people in charge of dealing out plots at the East Blue Mounds Cemetery, next to where the church once stood.

Although no document explicitly names a single member of the Jelle family as the forebearer of the street name, the recurrence of the Jelle name throughout the church history demonstrates that they were an active and important family in the Blue Mounds community.

Syverud Family and Syvrud Road

Syvrud Road is likely named after early settlers Mr. and Mrs. Knudt Syverud and their descendants and relatives, despite the discrepancies in the spelling of the name. The newer stone marker of the Syverud family plot in East Blue Mounds Cemetery spells the name Syvrud (fig. 36) while the gravestones behind it spell it Syverud (fig. 35). The road was thus likely named after the spelling change and named after relatives of the early Syverud settlers.

“1st Wisconsin Cavalry” is inscribed on Knudt K. Syverud’s gravestone (fig. 35). Ole Barton also fought in the Civil War. As the first settlers of Blue Mounds did not arrive until 1846, those who participated in the Civil War were quick to adopt the anti-slavery movement in United States. Such early examples of patriotism and anti-slavery sentiment reflect the commitment of many Norwegian immigrants to democracy and freedom in America. The traditional Church of Norway followed a Missourian doctrine which offered a neutral stance on the issue of slavery. This became a major point of conflict and schism in the church occurred upon these lines. One third of Norwegian Lutheran congregations withdrew from the Norwegian Synod, or the Church of Norway, to join the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood against slavery (Gjerde 1986: 689). The Anti-Missourian Brotherhood was later renamed the United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America (UNLCA) in 1890 (Legreid 1986: 304).

The Syverud family also played an important role in the East Blue Mounds Church. As mentioned earlier, the first resident pastor of Blue Mounds resided on Nils K. Syverud's farm. Mrs. Knudt Syverud, along with Mrs. Ole Barton and Mrs. Ole Jelle, helped with the reorganization of the Ladies Aid Society.

Knudt K. Syverud's participation in the Civil War and the community activity of other Syverud family members illustrate how Norwegian immigrants retained their Norwegian roots while engaging with, influencing, and being influenced by their new homeland.

The Role of English

In 1911, less than 60 years after Norwegian immigrants settled in Blue Mounds, the church began using English as the dominant language for church services. Reverend Severin Gunderson, born in Norway in 1853, guided the transition. He served as pastor from the East Blue Mounds congregation from 1890-1947 (Blue Mounds 1952: 22). During the transitional process as later generations became fluent in English while the earlier, older generations only spoke Norwegian, Reverend Gunderson "would read the Scriptures in both Norwegian and English, announce the hymns in both languages, and preach in both if he ever saw one or more persons in church who didn't know the foreign language" (Blue Mounds 1952: 19). By 1925 the transition was complete and the Norwegian language was used only for special occasions and for ceremonial purposes. However, it was not until 1 November 1938 that the congregation officially translated the constitution of the church into English (Blue Mounds 1952: 15).

The pamphlet for the 100th anniversary of the congregation describes the ease to which the church switched to English as possible because the Blue Mounds settlers were rural people. They could better retain their sense of Norwegian culture and identity because they had the church to garner a sense of identity and community from. Urban immigrants did not experience

this sense of community oriented around the church. They therefore felt the need to cling to their mother tongue as the main mode of expressing their cultural identity.

Democracy in the Church

American ideals such as democracy permeated the Norwegian Lutheran church in America. In his study focusing on the Norwegian Crow River settlement in Minnesota, Jon Gjerde differentiates between the voluntary membership of the settler's congregation in America and the involuntary nature of the Church of Norway (Gjerde 1986: 687). The relationship between the Pastor and the congregation also differed between the traditional Church of Norway and the American Norwegian Lutheran Church. "Instead of an upper-class pastor who often disdained the peasant congregations he was sent to serve, the Crow River clergyman depended on his congregation for his very job" (Gjerde 1987: 687). In a very different mood than disdain, the congregation of East Blue Mounds recounts the story of H.A. Stub, one of the early pastors previously mentioned who would visit Blue Mounds.

"The dread disease cholera was decimating settlements and Norwegians near Dodgeville and they [sic] urged the Rev. Stub to please come. Friends attempted to dissuade the journey on the grounds of reason, but the true pastor's heart is not fearful of disease. The roads according to the present standards were no roads at all.... And that was the way Rev. Stub found the Blue Mounds settlement of Norwegians" (Blue Mounds 1952: 4).

The difficult journeys early pastors embarked on reflect the pastors' dedication to their local congregation as well as their willingness to travel to further Norwegian settlements to provide solace and support.

In 1852 the immigrants residing in East Blue Mounds gathered at the Lukken School to elect trustees to officially establish a local parish. “So they organized a congregation, the people of the town of Blue Mounds, for themselves” (Blue Mounds 1952: 5). Settling in the United States provided the necessary backdrop for the immigrants to change the internal structure of the Lutheran Church that departed from the hierarchical nature of the Church of Norway.

Changes and Additions to the East Blue Mounds Church

After the building of the church in 1868, a one thousand pound bell was given to the church. For many years it remained on the ground before a larger steeple was installed in 1907 (Blue Mounds 1952, 16). The inscription on the bell is in Norwegian as it remains today and sits as a physical indicator of the Norwegian influence on Blue Mounds,

GUD ALENE AEREN

TILHØRER BLUE MOUNDS NORSK

EVANGELISK LUTHERSKE MENIGHED

1879

Today this bell once again resides on the ground, on the grounds of the cemetery, and is the only structure left of the East Blue Mounds Church on the property (fig. 37). It sits where the church once stood. Figure 37 in the appendix depicts how the old church grounds appears today and figure 38 is from the early 1900s before it was torn down in 1977. A plaque in front of the bell commemorates all of the pastors who served the congregation.

In addition to the new steeple in 1907, a new entrance hall was built as well. In 1936 the men of the congregation dug up the foundation and built parlors beneath the church and voluntary donation by congregation members paid for this renovation (Blue Mounds 1952: 16). In 1943 the interior of the church was redone, with new wood work, new flooring, and a new

chancel rug (Blue Mounds 1952: 16). Excitement over these new additions led to a re-dedication of the church on 14 November 1943. The time, money, and effort put into the church additions reflect the congregation's pride and sense of value of their church.

Conclusion, Demise, and Continued Celebration

The emergence of democracy and English in the church, as well as information on individual settlers, narrate the ways in which Norwegian immigrants adapted to and embraced their Norwegian-American identity. However, today the church no longer stands and the Barton Road sign is beat up and bent with graffiti on it (fig. 39). These landscape changes point out that the church no longer symbolizes the main mode of expressing one's ancestral origin. There are many flourishing Lutheran churches in the Blue Mound and greater Dane County communities with Norwegian roots. East Blue Mounds Lutheran congregation is not among them, despite its past role as the central source of cultural identity for first, second, and third generation Norwegian-Americans.

The last service of the church was in 1963 (Mound Horeb Mail 1979). In 1980 the "children of its founders" rededicated the one thousand pound bell, and a new bell tower on the ground to hold it, to the past generations for whom the bell tolled (fig. 37) (Mound Horeb Mail July 20 1980). Three former pastors of the congregation also attended the ceremony along with over one hundred community members (Mound Horeb Mail July 31 1980). Although the church may no longer serve the same purpose as it did to the earliest settlers, its importance in the community as an anchor of the town's history continues. Celebration of what the East Blue Mounds church signifies continues to define the identity of Norwegian-Americans in Dane County.

Toponym Analysis

One of the main ways that we have examined the effect of Norwegian-American culture on the landscape of Dane County has been through an analysis of toponyms. Our research has yielded some interesting and valuable insights, but has been far from exhaustive, as the potential for further discovery in this area is so great. To best frame our findings, it is important to acknowledge some of the key difficulties that we encountered in conducting this research. Apart from the time and budget constraints that we faced, the principal obstacle to overcome was the lack of a clear process to guide us. Researching toponyms in many ways is more an art than a science. It requires a synthesis of a variety of methods and sources and the results are very subjective at times. The availability of official records, also, varies as much as the quality. We chose not to use certain sources that required a payment, such as genealogical databases, for example. In other instances, the record keeping itself was incomplete or inconsistent. Adding to all of this are language problems, partly from our perspective as researchers, who do not speak Norwegian, but also stemming from the fact that the immigrants themselves did not share our ideas about surnames or adhere to the same spelling conventions that we do. This last point can also be attributed to the census workers, biographers, journalists and others who collected the data that we relied upon most heavily.

In addressing each of these problems, we tailored our data collection to avoid as many pitfalls as possible and reduce the amount of bias and conjecture in our final analysis. Beginning with our own lack of Norwegian language skills, we initially did not pursue any analysis of existing toponyms from the most common Norwegian surnames. Names as common as Gunderson, Olson or Peterson would be difficult in most cases, if not impossible, to link to their respective origins. Instead, we first compiled a list of street names that seemed to be Norwegian.

In our final results, we were able to eliminate any errant German, Swedish or other Scandinavian toponyms by only focusing only on those toponyms that can be tied to Norwegian people or places using various methods. Plat maps proved to be less helpful than we originally had hoped they would be, in part because of how sporadically they were created, but also because of the enormous amount of time required to compare those historical maps to more current ones. Instead, we relied more heavily on information from early histories of Dane County, many of which include data about and short biographies of notable local residents of the period. From these biographical clues we were able to gain more insight into the various localized Norwegian settlements and, in many instances, to make connections between these places, the people, and the named features that we were studying. In conclusion, it was also necessary to consult census records, obituaries, newspaper articles and church records to provide context to and help substantiate many of our claims.

The results of our primary data collection, in combination with the toponyms from the book *Dane County Place Names*, are a collection of more than twenty places names of Norwegian-American origin. These are presented under the sub-headings below organized by how our research led us to discover them. They exist on a continuum of how confident we are about their origin. The toponyms about which we are the most confident, and which were the easiest to research, are those that can be linked to place names in Norway, often the area that the settlers came from. The majority of our findings, however, are named for people. Among the easiest of these were those places named for prominent members of the local community at the time the area was settled. However, these did not constitute the majority of toponyms that we studied either. Rather, it was the Norwegian-Americans who settled on the land during the pioneer period of the late nineteenth century, but who did not necessarily hold leadership

positions or own their own land, who outnumbered all other groups. These have been divided into two groups below. Among the first group are those for whom it was relatively easy to establish a connection between a toponym and the person or family who gave that place its name because of a clear connection to a specific parcel of land. What was more often the case in our research, was that we could merely demonstrate that there had been, or continues to be, a family presence in the immediate vicinity over time. The nature of this latter type, which could be likened to circumstantial evidence in a legal context, speaks to the fact that these early settlers, whether Norwegian or from any other nationality, often did not have the means to purchase their own land and yet made up a large and important part of the population. This is especially evident when comparing census records to plat maps. In many cases, the land owners with English or English-sounding names seem to be in roughly equal numbers to those with Norwegian or German names, but the actual population data from census records indicates that these second generation American settlers were outnumbered by the immigrants from Norway and other European countries. Under the final subheading below we discuss the toponyms which bear Norwegian significance, but have less specific significance. These include toponyms that refer to the country of Norway as a whole or use Norwegian language terms, like the word *velkommen* or even English terms such as viking, which reflect a local pride in Norwegian-American culture.

Toponyms Named for Places in Norway

The first group of toponyms which we were able to connect to the Norwegian-American community of Dane County are derived from other place names in Norway. It should be noted that in most cases our research has not established a direct connection between those Norwegian locations and specific settlers to the area. Rather, it is necessary to assume that within these communities, which are in close proximity to the churches studied above, the likelihood that one

or more families had some connection the area in Norway from which the Dane County toponym is derived. Nowhere is this perhaps easier than in the case of the name for the township of Christiana, named for the Norwegian capital, which was called Christiana or Kristiana, alternately, before reverting to its original name of Oslo in 1925. Two other examples of toponyms which duplicate names of Norwegian places are Drammen Valley Road in Perry, named for the *kommune*, which is roughly equivalent to a state, named Drammen in Norway. Larvik Lane in Dunkirk, which also presumably takes its name from the kommune of the same name is another example of this. Many Norwegian settlers traditionally used their place of birth or some other place name as a part of their name, as has been pointed out earlier. A final example in this category helps to illustrate this point. Vinje Court in Blooming Grove also shares its name with a Norwegian kommune, however, there are also two prominent early settlers with the last name Vinje. Chief Justice Aad J. Vinje, born in Voss, Norway in 1857 arrived in the United States in the early 1870s and attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison from 1878 until 1884. Although he moved from Madison to practice law in Superior, Wisconsin and later in Minnesota, he returned to Madison and served on the Wisconsin Supreme Court from 1910 until his death in 1929. Interestingly, Judge Vinje's mother remarried after his father died and "the stepfather settled on the farm owned by his mother, and under Norwegian custom took the name of the farm, so that the name of both his father and his stepfather was Vinje". One of the judge's five children, Arthur M. Vinje (1888-1972), was also a notable community member who served as a Wisconsin State Journal photographer for much of his life (Wisc. Necrology vol. 26: 134-138).

Toponyms Named for Norwegian-American Immigrants

A second category of toponyms with Norwegian significance in Dane County, which is far more prevalent and constituted the majority of our findings, were those places that are named for prominent immigrants or their families. Many of these individuals were either written about in the History of Dane County (1880) or had lengthy obituaries in the local papers upon their deaths. Another noteworthy Norwegian-American photographer is indicative of this type of connection between the landscape and the community. Alv Andreas Dahl was an prolific photographer and one of his forefathers, Nels L. Dahl, was a founding settler of Windsor township. Nels arrived in Madison in 1864 and by 1870 had a thriving business in Deforest, which by 1880 carried “a general stock of dry goods, groceries, boots and shoes, notions, etc.” (History of Dane 1880: 1133). In a similar vein, Mandt Park in Pleasant Springs Township is almost certainly named for either Gunder T. or Targe G. Mandt who, like Nels Dahl, came from Telemarken, Norway in the middle of the nineteenth century and established themselves in business in Dane County. Gunder, who arrived in 1843 was a farmer until 1870, but then went into business with his nephew, Targe, who arrive in Stoughton in 1865 (Wisc. Necrology vol 7: 84). A less speculative example is that of Conrad Elvehjem (1901-1962), a prominent doctor and community member whose full name has been given to an elementary school in Stoughton and to nearby Elvehjem Road (Wisconsin Biographical: 167). Anne “Grandma” Ellestad came to the United States in 1857 at age 15 and lived to be 94 years old. She and her granddaughter, Mrs. Albert Lukken, both died in 1936 and each share their surnames with a feature of the Dane County landscape; Ellestad Drive in what was Blooming Grove and the Lukken School near Mount Horeb (Wisc. Necrology vol. 36: 211). A final example of this sort is Hegg Avenue, also in Blooming Grove, which could be for any number of noteworthy Norwegians with the same last name: Edward, Theodore, Martin H. Hegg or, indeed, Col. Hans Christian Heg. The latter of

these was honored with a statue in front of the Wisconsin State Capitol Building for his service in the American Civil War (Wisconsin History 2010).

Less often are those cases for which a very clear connection can be made between the owner of a particular parcel of land and the current toponym associated with it. One such case is that of Bliven Road in the town of Albion. The first registered owner of two plots of land in section 27 of Albion that are adjacent to Bliven Road was Horace C. Bliven. The plots were purchased in 1843 and 1848. Similarly, Jeglum and Kittleson valleys in Perry Township take their names from early Norwegian settlers to the area. Early histories refer to the purchase of land by Gunder Kittelson Renden and his family in sections 3, 9 and 10 of Pleasant Springs, very close to Rinden drive. Ole Bilstad, whose daughter married Gunder Mandt (mentioned above), lived in section 14 of Christiana as early as 1868, close to what is now called Bilstad Road. The history of the Vermont Lutheran Church references at least eight different individuals with the last name Bakken who were congregants at some point in that church's history; Bakken Road is nearby in section 10 of Springdale. Likewise, Ole Lunde owned land in sections 34 and 35 of Pleasant Springs, near present day Lunde Circle (Boyd 2006: 306-307, 318-319, 386-387, 398-399, 466-467, 478-479).

Many other examples, which vary in the amount of available evidence echo the examples discussed above. Bjelde Lane in Blooming Grove is near the land once owned by Johannes C. Bjelde. Natvig Road in Cottage Grove is near land which Orlin Natvig purchased in 1852. Iver Enderson Skaar purchased land in Blooming Grove, which is adjacent to Cottage Grove, where Skaar Road is located (Boyd 2006: 306-307). Following the example of Bakken Road in the previous paragraph, there are three other streets in the area which coincide with families who have long been active in the Vermont Church. The Thorson and Bergum families appear in the

Vermont Church History three times each and there are five mentions of the Forshaug family to correspond to Thorson Drive in Black Earth, Bergum Road in Blue Mounds, and Forshaug Road in Vermont, respectively (Urness 1981). Examples already uncovered in earlier portions of this paper including Barton Road and Syvrud Road in Blue Mounds also illustrate these kinds of connections.

Toponyms that Reflect or Celebrate Norwegian Heritage

A final category of Norwegian toponyms are those which clearly refer to Norwegian culture or reflect Norwegian heritage, but are more general and not necessarily named for any one person or place specifically. This seems to be especially true in some newer housing developments in Mount Horeb and Stoughton. In Mount Horeb, off of Norsk Ridge Road are the streets Nordic Trail, Viking Road and Nordic View. Located in the northernmost fringe of this city with large tracts of land nearby, it is easy to imagine a series of Norwegian and Scandinavian street names continuing in the future. Further to the south is Fjord Pass. These toponyms reflect a certain local pride that is centered on the association between Norwegian culture, particularly images of trolls, that has been appropriated by the city at large, as evidenced in (fig. 39). Although there is not the same concentration of names in Stoughton, a similar kind of branding of the town as a Nordic Space is clear in street names like Velkommen Way or Viking County Park. To illustrate the parallel between Stoughton and Mount Horeb, it is only necessary to visit the official homepage of each city. Mount Horeb, which calls itself the “Troll Capital of the World” has images of not only trolls, but also Norwegian crafts, people in traditional Norwegian dress, and even the URL trollway.com (Mount Horeb 2010). Stoughton’s website is a more generically civic design, but above the smaller American flag that appears on

the right hand margin is a photo of Norwegian flag next to the banner at the top of the page (Stoughton 2010).

Norwegian-American Tobacco Production

The Notstad Family

James Notstad is the owner of Berud-Olson farmstead on East Church Rd, in section 28 in the township of Christiana, Koshkonong settlement. Less than one half of a mile down the road is Notstad road. The farmstead itself is well maintained. The main house (fig. 22) is set back from the road and has changed little in the past 40 years (fig. 23). Some effort has been made to improve the landscaping, notice that the brush has been cut from the front yard and several trees have been removed making the house more visible. Directly across the street from the home is the dairy barn (fig. 24). Figure 25 shows that it has been recently renovated - the exterior walls have clearly been replaced and repainted and a window has been added just under the peak of the roof. Behind the home are three tobacco curing sheds which appear to have remained untouched.. Finally, to the left rear of the home is the tobacco stripping shed . The shed itself has been well maintained with no visible signs of renovation. A small farm building and a propane tank have been added, indicating further renovation within the home.

It had been difficult to find information regarding the Notstad family. What has been found links the Notstads to some of the first settlers in Wisconsin. On July 4 1839, Nils Sjurson Giljarhus emigrated to America. Arriving in New York he became frightened upon hearing the celebrations. Nils eventually found his way to Wisconsin.. After moving through the Fox River settlement they, along with Nils Bolstad, travelled to Koshkonong. Nils bought 70 acres of land in section 35 in the township of Deerfield in 1840, making him the first white landowner on

Koshkonong (Bovre 1989: 6). That same year Nils went to Chicago and met his brother Ola Sjurson Gilarhus, who had just arrived from Norway (Bovre 1989: 11). Ola and Nils purchased over 300 acres of land on sections 29, 33, 35, in Deerfield.

These prominent men left over one hundred descendents in Dane county alone. among these are both Nottestad and Notstad. (Bovre 1989: 11) .Of the two Koshkonong cemeteries, the Notstads are buried exclusively in section B in the cemetery of the East Koshkonong Churches (East Koshkonong 2002). While the specific historical details of the Notstad family are vague, those facts that are available demonstrate the influence of Norwegians in Wisconsin. The Notstad name can be found throughout the East Koshkonong cemetery and connected to the first Norwegian settlers in Wisconsin. The Notstads have left their name on the landscape in the form of a named street as well as owners of a historical tobacco farmstead.

Tobacco

The connection between Norwegians and tobacco is complex. Unlike many ethnic traditions in the United States, knowledge of tobacco cultivation was not brought from Norway with the pioneers, but was instead bound to their culture after their arrival in Wisconsin (Ibarra and Strickton 1989: 4). Norwegians cultivating tobacco soon realized the crop's potential for securing their financial independence, dubbing it the "mortgage lifter" (Ibarra and Strickton 1989: 5). Since then, tobacco cultivation has become a distinctly Norwegian enterprise in Wisconsin. It is not uncommon to find a tobacco field located next to a Lutheran church or in a vacant lot in a historically Norwegian town (Raitz and Mather 1971: 689-690). It is so important that the Norwegian settlement of Deerfield named its first two official newspapers *The Tobacco Herald* and *The Tobacco Journal* (Miek 1993). Several scholars have attempted to discover how tobacco cultivation has become an identifier of ethnicity in Wisconsin.

In *Norwegians and Tobacco Production in Western Wisconsin*, Karl B. Raitz and Cotton Mather assert that Norwegian tobacco production cannot be explained simply by the soil conditions, climate or topography found in Wisconsin. Instead, they suggest that the disproportionate number of Norwegian tobacco farmers compared to other ethnic groups indicates that ethnicity should be included as a variable in analysis (Raitz and Mather 1971: 684). They also argue that tobacco production in western Wisconsin has reached its northernmost climatic limits. The growing season in the driftless area of western Wisconsin narrowly accommodates the 100-120 days required for tobacco to reach maturity, with only 117 growing days (Raitz and Mather 1971: 684-685). They also reject topography and soil quality as a likely explanation for the location of tobacco production. Soil quality is the most significant factor in leaf quality, and yet tobacco cultivation is not limited to those farms with good soil, but can be found in areas of varying soil quality (Raitz and Mather 1971: 685-686). Likewise there seems to be no correlation between the situation of tobacco production in western Wisconsin and proximity to markets, which were located near larger metropolitan areas (Raitz and Mather 1971: 686). They conclude that there must be some cultural element at work.

Raitz and Mather saw the church and marriage as key factors in which ethnic groups participated in tobacco production. In examining the main ethnic groups in western Wisconsin that grow tobacco, they discovered that there are high numbers of Norwegian wives in non-Norwegian areas. Areas that contain a dense population of Norwegian wives are situated close to large Norwegian communities. Raitz and Mather suggest that these wives have influenced the crops grown on the farmsteads of their German and Irish husbands. An equally important cultural element is the church. The two main ethnic groups in this region were Norwegians and Germans, who were both predominately Lutheran. Thus, the church served as a “point of

contact” between German and Norwegian immigrants, through which German immigrants learned about tobacco. They conclude that the church and inter-ethnic marriage were the elements that allowed knowledge of tobacco cultivation to be culturally diffused (Raitz and Mather 1971: 693-696).

The Norwegian-American Dairy Strategy in Southwestern Wisconsin, by Robert Ibarra and Arnold Strickton offers a precise explanation for the Norwegian tobacco connection. Norwegians were introduced to tobacco while working on Yankee tobacco farms in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin, including the southern tobacco district in Dane County (Ibarra and Strickton 1989: 5). As more pioneers arrived, they passed through these settlements. Koshkonong had become the “gateway” for Norwegian Americans moving westward, so it is likely that later settlers -- those that would eventually settle in western Wisconsin -- learned how to cultivate tobacco in places such as Koshkonong. As Norwegians moved north they took the knowledge of tobacco cultivation with them. Although Raitz and Mather acknowledge that Norwegians moved from Dane County to western Wisconsin from 1840-1850 (Raitz and Mather 1971: 694), they fail to see this as a site for cultural transaction. Explaining that economic inertia could not have been a factor, they write “tobacco in the state was introduced by Yankee and other American emigrants... who settled in Dane County, near Madison, in the 1850s. Tobacco was not introduced into the driftless hill lands of Vernon and Crawford Counties... until some two decades after its debut near Madison” (Raitz and Mather 1971: 688). Their failure to include complete historical research results in a narrative that ignores the crucial Yankee Norwegian connection.

Raitz and Mather have overlooked other historical factors that explain the persistence of tobacco in Norwegian-American life. As the so-called Yankees left tobacco production for more

profitable ventures, Norwegians assumed their roles as both grower and buyer (Ibarra and Strickton 1989: 3-6). When the Great Depression caused tobacco prices to fall, many tobacco farmers left the business. A great deal of those that remained were Norwegian, as cultivating tobacco became a point of identity for Norwegians in America and the business served as a space for cultural interactions among Norwegians as they infiltrated all levels of the business. After World War II, their connection to tobacco was further cemented by their vote to participate in the tobacco allotment system. While, as Raitz and Mather argue, ethnicity should be considered when studying tobacco production, historical and economic factors are of great value as well (Ibarra and Strickton 1989: 6-7).

Raitz and Mather also propose that tobacco cultivation is far too labor intensive for Norwegians, who often also raised dairy cows on their farms. They claimed that, based on average acreage and herd size, participation in both would require “62 forty hour weeks” per year. Hiring outside labor would not have been an option, as migrant labor would have been too costly and many workers would not have had experience working with tobacco. Family labor would only be of use until the children left home, leaving the farmer in great need of help (Raitz and Mather 1971: 687-688).

However, Ibarra and Strickton believe that these conclusions are founded in “economic rationality”. First, they propose that Norwegians who both grew tobacco and raised dairy cows had developed a complex schedule to insure that neither activity would significantly interfere with the other. Although this often diminished the productiveness of the dairy operation, having multiple sources of income provided financial security in an unstable economy. Second, tobacco had always been a secondary crop -- first to wheat and later to dairy. Statistically, tobacco only accounted for 0.07 percent of the economy, compared to 95 percent dairy (Ibarra and Strickton

1989: 8-9). In fact, farmers who continued with tobacco and dairy rather than modernizing or diversifying their operations seem to be the only farmers with liquid assets. Finally, family labor is free labor. Most farm activities have become mechanized while cultivating tobacco has remained a manual task. Thus as long as there is a family member available, their labor is directed towards tobacco. “No matter what the farm size, reduction or cessation of tobacco growing, as long as ‘free’ family labor is available, is throwing out an income-producing resource without replacing it” (Ibarra and Strickton 1989: 19-20).

Research Conclusions

Much of the historical narrative of the early settlements in eastern Dane County has been lost as members of each generation passed through the figurative gateway of the Koshkonong settlements to the Perry and Blue Mounds settlements in western Dane County. However physical markers including Norwegian American Lutheran churches, street and other place names, and tobacco sheds remain prominent throughout the county. Each of these physical artifacts portray how the Dane County landscape reflects the ways in which Norwegian-Americans celebrated and continue to celebrate their Norwegian heritage.

Toponyms offer a relatively permanent indicator of Norwegian heritage that changes little over the decades. Streets named after early settlers remain the official names of roads. Gravestones also offer more permanent evidence of the strong Norwegian influence in Dane County. The changing role of the church in the community illustrates how descendants of Norwegian immigrants identify with their ancestral heritage. Although the Lutheran church may not be as central to a given community as it was for immigrants upon first arrival to Wisconsin, contemporary generations continue to celebrate their heritage. Evidence of this modern

celebration can be found throughout Dane County in everyday life. A car wash in Mt. Horeb is named “Trollway Liquors and Car Wash” (fig. 45) and the welcome sign to the town is in Norwegian. Also in Mt. Horeb, a Norwegian flag flies next to the American flag at a park entrance (fig. 44). New modes of expression continue to appear in towns across Dane County as individuals still feel a connection to their Norwegian roots and evidence of that celebration is visible as physical impresses throughout the landscape.

Future and Further Research

Due to limitations of time and funding, our research has focused primarily on a selection of Norwegian Lutheran churches in Dane County and toponyms. It is important that we present our findings in the context of the other vital elements of the Norwegian cultural landscape that we did not focus on. The most glaring example of this is tobacco sheds. The connection between tobacco production and community solidarity deserves to be explored in greater detail. In our research we discovered associations between tobacco producers and insurance providers that underscore the tight community bonds of the Norwegian communities of the Koshkonong, Perry and Blue Mounds settlements discussed in our work. The ethnic and cultural associations of the tobacco producers in present day Dane County, and particularly in the three communities examined in this paper, also merit further research. Much of the literature reviewed indicated that there is still a strong correlation between tobacco and Norwegian heritage, however, in our field observations, especially in the Koshkonong settlement, many of the tobacco sheds that we encountered were in such disrepair that they appeared to not be functioning.

In addition to tobacco sheds, a number of previously unconsidered elements of the Norwegian cultural landscape have presented themselves to us over the course of our research

which warrant further study. Cuppola style barns proved to be a recurring landscape feature that we observed during fieldwork. Unfortunately we were unprepared to document this particular landscape feature, and our budget prevented us from pursuing any further investigation. Future research should include these types of barns, perhaps in relation to the types of farms that they are situated on. Through the course of our research it also became clear that material culture, especially religious artifacts, are extremely valuable resources that reveal a rich narrative about the people who produced, saved and continue to value them. In some cases this fact became known too late in our research to be explored. Further research should be done to discover what information these artifacts hold. In the case of the Koshkonong churches especially, religious artifacts could divulge information which is absent from written documentation. Other examples of material culture include Mt. Horeb's Troll and the traditional clothing worn by those participating in Stoughton's Syttende Mai festival. Examining how these phenomena evolved since the Norwegian settlers arrived in Wisconsin will provide a more complete understanding of the Norwegian American experience.

The settlements at Koshkonong, Perry and Blue Mounds are only a few of the many places in Dane County that have been shaped by Norwegian Americans. While these have had a profound effect on the region, there are many others that have been shaped by Norwegian settlers. Among other settlements that beg for further inquiry are Springdale, DeForest, Hope and Vermont. Each of these are of particular interest to us due to their proximity to the three settlements that we have studied here. Beyond these, there are a great deal of other settlements in Dane County which have been shaped by Norwegian settlers. Larger towns, such as Mount Horeb and Stoughton, have embraced their Norwegian heritage by weaving it into the town's

identity. In comparison to the smaller settlements of Dane County, these would provide insight into the broad range of Norwegian cultural representation in the landscape.

Finally, this type of research need not be limited to Dane County, nor to the Norwegian ethnicity. For example, there are almost certainly similar conclusions to be found about different ethnicities in Dane County alone, such as the German ethnicity. Also, this research could be conducted for almost any type of social space - from localized viewpoints such as villages or neighborhoods, to cities, counties, and provinces, to even countries and global regions. Our research represents the greater body of all cultural landscape research -- these methods and analysis styles can be applied to nearly any scope and be successful.

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