

MINNESOTA RIVER MATRIX: “non-discursive” alignments of immigrant churchyards on center lines in a New Norwegian Landscape, ca 1870-1900

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Introduction

“Years afterward, when the open-grazing days were over, and the red grass had been ploughed under and under until it had almost disappeared from the prairie; when all the fields were under fence, and the roads no longer ran about like wild things, but followed the surveyed section lines, Mr Shimerda’s grave was still there, with a sagging wire fence around it, and an unpainted wooden cross. As grandfather had predicted, Mr. Shimerda never saw the roads going over his head. The road from the north curved a little to the east just there, and the road from the west swung out a little to the south; so that the grave, with its tall red grass that was never mowed, was like a little island; and at twilight under a new moon or the clear evening star, the dusty roads used to look like soft gray rivers flowing past it. I never came upon the place without emotion, and in all that country it was the spot most dear to me. I loved the dim superstition, the proprietary intent, that had put the grave there; and still more I loved the spirit that could not carry out the sentence—the error from the surveyed lines, the clemency of the soft earth roads along which the home-coming wagons rattled after sunset. Never a tired driver passed the wooden cross, I am sure, without wishing well to the sleeper.” (My Ántonia; Willa Cather 1918:118)

The autobiographical narrator in this novel is “American”, and the newly immigrant Shimerda family Bohemian, yet they farmed near a substantial Norwegian community around the 1870-1880’s in Nebraska. The only consecrated cemetery in the vicinity at the time of Ántonia’s father’s tragic suicide was Norwegian Lutheran. It wasn’t however, because of any doctrinal conflict with these Catholic Bohemians, *per se*, that Mr. Shimerda was denied a plot in hallowed ground, but rather because of the sin of taking one’s own life. Thus denied, Cather describes the family decision where to locate the single grave. From the quote above one realizes that the point chosen was an abstract intersection of north-south and east-west cardinal lines--actually the very corner of section property--a point wholly undefined as yet by section roads, plowed fields, fences or any other artifact except for subtle survey marks in the still natural or “wild” prairie landscape.

Cather poetically renders the formation of a new cultural landscape where religion and particularly death must be located in some shared spatial frame. These ritual acts almost universally involve some sort of abstract geometry to help facilitate location and practice that transports humans to the spiritual realm. What is the difference between this kind of effect in locating a burial site at an abstract intersection point in a still natural landscape--and performing the ritual-- and thinking about some future reverence for the site when section roads are built and people drive by? The grave’s location right at the cross point with no room for future roads

suggests greater consideration of the former than the latter. Cather's story mentions Bohemian superstitions about burying suicides at cross roads (Cather 1918:113), also speaking more about spiritual power of the geometric point as connector to the other world, than as a remembrance sign. In a European survey of crossroads folklore, Puhvel (1976:172) describes the practice in Wales when the corpse was carried from the deceased's house to the church; the "bier" was set down at every crossroad, where the entourage knelt and the minister prayed. Puhvel speculates these acts were to "protect the dead from the demonic powers associated with cross-roads".

Traditions in latter 19th century Norway embraced a wide range of concepts about "cross" symbolism, farmstead layout and iconography of folk artifacts (not readily associated with things "Christian") essential in controlling contact between human and spiritual worlds. Cemeteries and their churches are themselves "cross" loci, though most often socially controlled in a manner different from crossroads. Literature about related practices in the New World is scant given the wide range of topics covered by histories of immigration and particularly attention given to the evolution of Lutheran doctrine once liberated from state control in Norway. At least one publication, however, describes spatial aspects of burial practice in a Norwegian-American congregation in Western Minnesota. Again, the issue is where to bury people who commit suicide. Ostlie (1992:7) describes a woman's self-inflicted death by arsenic and the decision by congregation members to have the funeral service at home rather than at the churchyard. But where would she be buried? From Ostlie: "some Norwegian Lutheran churches would not allow the casket of a suicide to be carried through the (churchyard) gate, but allowed it to be lifted over the fence and then buried in the cemetery. Others strictly forbade the body to be placed in hallowed ground, a place reserved for those who had died a "good death"; suicides had to be buried outside the fence". Historically, however, the farm dwelling in Norway before the Reformation used to be the *principal* location for rites of passage, i.e. birth, marriage and death, before the ritual focus shifted to the church and churchyard. In these times not taking the casket through the church gate occurred during funerals as a way of not reversing the transformation from human to spirit which occurred first at the dwelling threshold. But these customs say little about how the churchyard locus becomes hallowed in the first place. Beyond the need to be consecrated by a priest, does the location in the landscape contribute to its power to transform between worlds, not unlike crossroads?

The suicide burial of Francis Sadliek (Mr. Shimerda) in My Ántonia exists today as a Nebraska state historical site. It no longer is the complete crossroads site observed by Cather; no north-south road exists, and the east-west road runs straight through the intersection point of the four sections. The grave was apparently moved north a short distance to accommodate the modern road. The original grave was likely located a few meters from the section intersection stake, just on the southwest corner of Sadliek land (quite possibly a typical quarter-section). At the time of burial, no cultural artifact, save for a surveyor's mark of some sorts, would have been seen from this location in the rolling hills of native prairie grass. Nor did farmers possess any kind of drawn or printed survey map of neighboring areas, only legal descriptions in terms of section numbers and latitudes and longitudes of these lines. In their heads of course, immigrants undoubtedly formed conceptions of how section lines and farm boundaries mapped out along cardinal axes of the grid. Certainly this knowledge was shared, creating collective conceptions of space useful beyond the internal control and functioning of the farm.

Did Mr. Sadliek's burial location have some larger cultural landscape meaning, beyond its cross symbolism as section intersection point? St. Stephanie (or Dane), the still standing Scandinavian church that refused the burial, is also listed as a Nebraska historical site. Placing ourselves at the "wild" Sadliek site, back in time, where in some possible collective immigrant map is St. Stephanie located? It lies due east along the same section line, also at a section cross point; though only one section or mile away, the church cannot be seen from Mr. Sadliek's burial point. St. Stephanie's churchyard location is also at an abstract intersection point, dispelling Cather's idea that cross (roads) burials were only associated with suicides. Created several years prior to Mr. Sadliek's death, the church cemetery was apparently positioned for other reasons associated with cross symbolism. In the minds of the Sadlieks, the location of the suicide grave could have involved this other meaning, i.e. they may have been aware that the grave is cardinally connected with the church cemetery to the east. Not only does his grave formally integrate with the churchyard where he was denied, but East is the universal Christian direction of heaven, nominally symbolized by the location of alters at that end of church naves. Did Mr. Sadliek, therefore, symbolically pass through St. Stephanie's thresholds on his way to the other world?

But this early cultural landscape "frame" also connects west of the suicide cross point. According to Norlie's 1918 survey of Norwegian Lutheran congregations, St. Stephanie appears

to be a daughter church to the first congregation in this area northwest of present day Red Cloud Nebraska. The mother church of Zion (organized 1877) may have shared a pastor, as was often the case, with St. Stephanie somewhere from 1880-1884 (Norlie's information on St. Stephanie is less detailed than for Zion). Imagining again the experience of locating burial points in the wild landscape, St. Stephanie's positioning appears to have followed a pattern not-dissimilar from that of the Sadliek's solitary burial. The mother-daughter cemeteries/churches are also cardinally on the same east-west section line; Zion lies seven miles to the west, again on a cross point. Not only does the suicide grave sit exactly on the line between the two Norwegian churches, but a third consecrated cemetery, founded by Methodists from Virginia follows the pattern, also at a cross point and aligned with the three others cardinally east-west (including Mr. Sadliek). The New Virginia graveyard lies three miles to the west of the suicide burial, though its church--typically built several years later--is off the line a mile east and a half mile north of its cemetery. Only four early immigrant cemeteries appear on USGS quad maps in this approximately 200 sq. mi. area northwest of Red Cloud; three are aligned east-west at section cross points, while the fourth, Pleasant Prairie, apparently not associated with a particular congregation, lies three miles south of the line and not on a cross point.

One could continue this Cather mapping exercise in Nebraska, looking at township structure (standard squares of thirty-six sections, not actual villages or towns), the orientations of churches, e.g. St. Stephanie which still stands faces east (to Zion perhaps), contrary to Christian convention, the orientations of graves, and perhaps elements within the churches themselves. But the purpose of the present work should now be clear. This effort, however, did not begin by rereading Willa Cather, or for that matter by discovering a vein of established mapping discourse about abstract, ritual-like landscape conceptions of immigrants.

It is rather a continuation of the author's ideas about formalized spatial expression begun in dissertation work on traditional farm settings in Norway (Doxtater 1981). The idea of possible linkage with the New World occurred recently while using free conference time to drive around the Minnesota landscape, just east of an archeological meeting in Fargo. The locations and names of some Norwegian immigrant cemetery/church sites suggested formal, spatial relationships at larger, though not immediately perceptible, landscape scales. Academic work on the topic proceeded in earnest after preliminarily entering over 1,200 such sites found on digital USGS quads in the larger part of Minnesota where Norwegian farmers (including a lesser number of

Swedes and Danes) homesteaded. This area resembles the profile of a boot with the Canadian and Iowan borders on top and bottom, the Dakotas on the west, and the toe protruding east to the Mississippi (omitting the less agricultural forest areas to the northeast of the state). Only rural cemeteries at least several miles from any village or city were initially mapped.

This work requires custom software, the presentation topic at the Fargo conference (Doxtater 2002, 2008). Though not technically remarkable, *per se*, it is essential to quickly switch back and forth between digital USGS quads and satellite imagery (among other map providers), all the while maintaining marked locations of cemeteries. In previous work, this software has been useful in evaluating land survey accuracy of formal patterns among archaeological sites in context with significant features of the larger natural landscape. It also can test against random phenomena to demonstrate design intent (Doxtater 2009). In the present case the landscape was unquestionably surveyed, though primarily for practical legal and economic reasons.

Since almost all section lines in the presently mapped portion of Minnesota are today either well-maintained gravel roads or paved, they create a strong visual pattern on both USGS quads and aerial maps, not unlike the views flying over much of the Midwest in clear weather. Many seemingly formal, aligned relationships among mapped cemetery sites (and their churches where still standing) are quickly discerned. One finds many pairs and triplets at relatively close distances, not unlike the Nebraska example, some of which add cardinally opposed names like “north” and “south” or “east” and “west” to the spatial relationship (though not all such named congregations are aligned along section lines). Some section lines align cemeteries at much larger distances, raising questions about just how far these collective landscape maps of immigrants extended, or conversely, how many of these patterns are just random? One dominant rule, in this regard, is the fact that virtually all cemeteries are located on section lines, though not necessarily on cross points. When property was given or sold for cemetery purposes, it needed to be on the outside edge of land which some day might be fully under the plow. Initially, however, there may have been little consideration for eventual access by roads on section lines.

One reason why these patterns haven’t been investigated is the difficulty of experiencing them in the present day Minnesota landscape, in spite of ubiquitous section roads. Rolling hills and large groves of trees around today’s farmsteads mask the perception of aligned cemeteries, particularly since a majority of them no longer contain a church and steeple. Nor are these

patterns immediately evident in common road maps, mainly at county or state scales, or even in USGS quads, where one must carefully search for the small print of a site name. Even Google's recording of standing rural churches is hit or miss. One needs to find and graphically highlight these points. The Cather example on a background of USGS quads was first evaluated with the described software, but then omitted so as to better convey an actual immigrant experience in locating cemeteries. This should be kept in mind when looking at the graphically necessary landscape maps that follow, where as much as possible attempts are made to replicate the perceived physical landscape at particular historic times.

Copious literature defines the vital social importance of rural Lutheran congregations to Scandinavian immigrants, and two of these will be discussed in some detail for the Norwegian case. Absent in most are investigations of symbolic reasons for cemetery location and church orientation. In a piece entitled "The Twin Churches of Christiania", internal strife causes the Norwegian congregation to build two identical churches, with the exact same name "on opposite corners of the intersection of the two main roads in the community" about 1860 in Eureka Township, Dakota County, Minnesota (Dyste 1992:73). Dyste begins his detailed description of the long doctrinal and highly personal struggle among congregation factions: "It was said that if one saw a white painted church on each side of a road, one could be sure of being in a Norwegian community", and by implication one that had fractioned. This account, however, reveals a lack of careful consideration for the process of locating cemeteries and churches. From an early township plat map in 1856, just before the congregations were formed and presumably cemeteries located, there were no "main roads in the community". The only two roads that are shown in the township are "wild" and do not follow section lines. Originally, therefore, the twin churches of Christiania appear to have been located on each side of an abstract north-south section line or meridian that created the border between sections 28 and 29. The cemetery on the west side is about 150 meters south of its twin on the east side. The east-west road that creates today's crossroads, opposing the two sites diagonally across the intersection, curiously is not on a section line. Whether this involved some sort of spiritual symbolism, territorial delineation of the two congregations (together with the north-south section line), or was more simply a transportation expedient remains to be seen.

Because the western church no longer stands, one does not immediately know from aerials whether it also twinned the orientation of the extant east church with its conventional west

facing entrance. At another pair in Clay County (though the buildings are built some thirty years apart and are not identical) the cemeteries and their churches are similarly located west (Rollag 1898) and east (Grong 1872) about 400 meters apart along a north-south section line. In this case the churches of these two different Lutheran doctrines and pastors at the time, and different parts of Norway, face each other via their common axis. The Norwegian-American mowing the lawn at one of the two St. Petri cemetery sites about 600 visible meters apart on the north side of an east-west section road in Camp Release Township, Lac Qui Parle County, said that these too were “twins”, the second built and oriented identically after a doctrinal split. His uncle had fashioned the memorial that included the bell and the entry steps to the eastern church (neither church still stands).

A wide net was cast for any kind of publication exploring abstract, religiously significant beliefs about elements in the immigrant landscape. Most research of settlement histories, agricultural practices, or religious organization, however, seldom use cognitive spatial maps of subjects as primary data. The exception here may be current agricultural research that uses techniques of cognitive mapping to better understand farmers’ conceptions of ecological meanings in their land (Fairweather 2010). Even where research specifically focuses on the influence of religion in agricultural or ecological adaptation by different immigrant groups, discussion doesn’t integrate actually experienced concepts of landscapes. Swiernega’s 1997 piece on “The Little White Church...”, provides a comprehensive overview of work that speaks to the effect of religion on agricultural history, using adjectives like “individual” and “communal”, or “sacred ecological” and “capitalistic” as variables, these among different immigrant religions. Only one very small segment in Swienega is exceptional here, i.e. the case where Dutch Calvinists, in their penchant for order, insisted on strictly aligning rows of crops with section lines, compared to neighboring religious groups who planted along contour lines to better conserve the soil (1997:437).

Nor do letters from farmers and ministers to those back home speak about landscape places to any great extent, focusing not unsurprisingly on the immediate realities of family and farming life. Yet one extensive ethnographic study of living members of a Swedish community in New Sweden, Maine, gives a glimpse of folklore beliefs these settlers brought with them. One tale shared by informants in the late 1960’s relates that: “a Christian girl captured by the trolls or

someone else advises others to ride straight across a plowed field, since the trolls must run up and down furrows.” (Sklute 1970:219)

Veit et.al.(2009) provides an overview of historical archaeology where greater interest lies in burial practices, at the core of archaeology since its inception, including forensics and dating of the buried, deposits of cultural artifacts, construction of chambers, iconography of memorials, and the like. Veit et. al.’s discussion of this kind of archaeological work on immigrant cemeteries lists none that seeks to understand reasons for location.

In the absence of work that maps early cultural space of immigrant groups, one finds the counter argument, i.e. that the grid definitions of land by government and industrial interests powerfully suppressed more local, ethnic expression on the land:

“For the most part settlers were obliged to operate within a settlement framework created by the federal government and the railway companies which served their interests rather than those of the settlers. The basis of the prairie culture landscape was set by major governmental and corporate institutions; the ethnic signatures of the peoples who settled the land were generally found only in the more transient features of their domestic landscapes.” (Lier & Katz 1994:1)

Ideas of state dominance seem to work from an assumption based on missing map research at larger scales, considering ethnic landscapes to be confined to the smallest settings, particularly the architectural farmstead and cemetery/church.

Hildegard Binder Johnson, once a faculty member at two universities in Minnesota, can probably be thought of as the best source not only for a history of the grid in the Midwest, but more importantly for the then novel consideration of experiential aspects of the grid—though not focused on shared cultural meanings by ethnic groups. Historically, the evolution of section roads in a wild landscape is clearly articulated. She quotes an informant from Iowa:

“In the beginning, the landscape was a glorious undulating sea of waving prairie grass, on which floated here and there a quadrangular raft of tillage. The roads were wagon tracks running diagonally from the village to farms, and in main roads from town to town; but these were gradually crowded by tillage from their antiodlin courses to their present places on the section lines, all running north and south or east and west” (in Fuller 1964:178)

While this farmer does not recognize the historical fact that villages and towns for the most part *followed* early settlement of farms and in most cases the establishment of church sites, the transformation of roads is vivid. Johnson comments that the impetus to the “good-roads”

movement at the cusp between 19th and 20th centuries lay in the establishment of Rural Free Delivery of mail which particularly led to straight, maintained section roads (1974:18).

She argues more theoretically in this and other papers in the 70's for a more nuanced and experiential perception of the grid. As a German (academic) immigrant herself, Johnson even mentions Mircea Eliade, an influential religious historians whose classic "The Sacred and the Profane" includes rich descriptions of "center" abstractions of ritual space (usually involving oppositions along cardinal lines). She does not suggest that the speculator's grid achieves such "archetypal" meaning as cultural settings did over long periods in Europe (the issue of prehistoric vs. historic notwithstanding), but that rectangularity as the strongest formalizing element deserves better "indigenous" understanding rather than taken as "simplistic standardization" (Johnson 1974:25).

Schein's (2003) theoretical front piece to this volume on the "normative" landscape more than once conveys indebtedness to the ideas of J.B. Jackson, which parallel the work of Johnson though perhaps more in a Heideggerian than Eliadian vein . The interpretation Jackson left behind sees the cultural landscape as "both a material thing and a conceptual framing of the world" (2003:202) and as such can include a concern for social purposes including change. But more experientially, what did Jackson understand from his crisscrossing of Midwest grids by motorcycle on his way to Santa Fe? In a piece focused on the ubiquitous American grid, Jackson (1986) describes an almost necessary stripping away of social and cultural content from the village and architectural forms that followed earliest European immigrants. Those patterns were too steeped in the inequalities of social history. In Jackson's view, the grid pattern's essence is its non-meaning in any historical or ethnic context, as well as its independence from characterizations as "scenic". Available for appropriation by all, its content can only be understood by focusing on the way time and social use add or subtract value to the structure.

Certainly this idea of non-meaning fits the present possibility of early Norwegians using the grid in some uniquely religious way, prior to the transformation of the landscape into large, industrial scale agriculture and society. But what if, one asks, these Norwegians had some experience in the old country landscape and farm settings, formal aspects of which were not dissimilar to the abstract patterns of the section grid system?

NORWAY

If the reader has traveled the magnificent fjords and mountain valleys of Norway it will be necessary to exorcise these scenic images from the perceptual mind. Following Johnson and Jackson, one seeks evidence of fundamentally different kinds of experience in the landscape that built up over thousands of years of farming in a cultural group. The best testimony in this regard is the commonality of Scandinavian culture of Norway, where the vast majority of the country cannot be put to the plow, and Denmark or Southern Sweden with their flatland panoramas of farms. The lack of territorialized landscape that occurred historically in the rest of Europe surely is one reason for the preservation of ancient Scandinavian landscape meaning. This homogeneity even preceded Christianization by several thousand years. How did indigenous conceptions of landscape absorb the first Christian cemeteries and churches at the end of the first millennium? How did indigenous conceptions of sacred sites accommodate foreign cross structures, mostly expressed architecturally, from European societies to the south as described by Eliade? What of this symbiosis remained to be transplanted to the Minnesota prairie?

Academic fields in Norway currently research the complexity of interrelationships of different meanings of their landscape, even across time. Prominent among these are values of wildlands, historic farm culture, and modern agricultural economics, e.g. Kaltenborn & Bjerke (2002). Methodology follows earlier work in environmental psychology where photos of natural form are statistically evaluated for preferences by viewers. But whereas in earlier methodology every attempt was made to eliminate any hint of human use, now the goal is to include preferences for or against cultural elements of the landscape, whether functional or symbolic. This knowledge facilitates land management by governmental agencies.

Stabbetorp et.al. (2007) reveals a stronger interest in cultural form *per se*; they seek to compare the resource exploitation of a composite agrarian landscape at different historical periods. A relatively small scale setting in rural Norway, about 10 kilometers in each dimension, is inventoried from Bronze, Iron and Medieval periods, each of which includes variations of agriculture, farms, Pre-Christian graves and churches. These then serve as “value assessment” underlays for planning the present landscape. Missing, however, in such layers of GIS objects at different epochs as “tilled fields”, “graves”, or “churches”, are any maps of formalized geometric patterns, particularly among the most symbolic objects, cemeteries and churches. Was the alignment and cross location of Norwegian cemeteries in Cather’s Nebraska landscape something

totally new to this farm culture? Was the natural topography so dominant in Norway that ritual frames were limited in scale to dwellings, farmsteads, graves and churches?

Evidence of abstract conceptions of “cosmos” in prehistoric Norway

Larger scale symbolic concepts of space clearly existed in prehistoric Norse religion, see for example Brink 2004, Dumezil 1973, Hastrup 1985, Meletinskji 1973, Olsen 1966, Wellendorf 2006. Yet in spite of a large literature no Scandinavian archaeologist or historian, with the possible exception of Sahlqvist 2000, has yet mapped larger scale formal, geometric patterns between sites as in the Cather example. This excludes published work documenting archaeoastronomical orientations or symbolic geometries between cultural features within a site, in the construction of the object itself, or between site and natural features, e.g. Bandholm 2012, Bradley 2000 & 2006, Randsborg & Nybo 1984, Roslund 1995. The difference between the symbolic timing of religious events by observing the sun at solstices or equinoxes, for example, and using abstract spatial frames to actually organize and practice ritual in the larger landscape can be glimpsed even in the Nebraska example. The two Norwegian cemeteries/churches at the ends of the west-east section line undoubtedly participated in some shared ritual events given their apparent mother-daughter relationships; and who knows, maybe the Virginia Methodists were included for some more purely social events. This spatial structure may have been timed by calendars (that replaced astronomical ones) but ritual effectiveness would have been incomplete without the experience of social groups moving through the landscape frame.

As difficult as is to map larger scale ritual in Scandinavia from archaeological evidence alone, work by the Swedish archaeologist Lindström 1997 & 2005 somewhat tangentially provides a tantalizing clue of some such prehistory. He critiques archaeoastronomy maintaining that prehistoric Scandinavian graves were oriented to sunrise or set phenomena as observed with local landscape features at the time of death. Lindström instead finds patterns of grave orientations, primarily in regions of Sweden but possibly inclusive of other parts of Scandinavia, that suggest some shared concept of “cardinal” directions at much larger, non-local scales, see figure 1. His off cardinal “systems” are apparently created by broad cultural adherence to two specific times, the fall fest after equinox, and the winter solstice sunrise. A third orientation is added at Easter after Christianization (roughly around the turn of the first millennium).

Significantly all three “systems” exhibit *two* grave orientations perpendicular to each, creating a cross cardinal pattern.

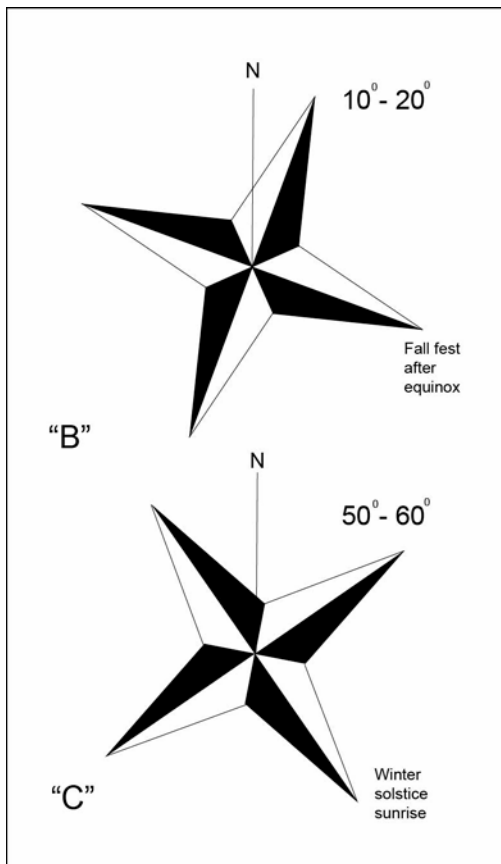


Figure 1. Evidence of non-local off cardinal “systems” of orientation in prehistoric Scandinavian graves, from Lindström (1997).

Lindström doesn’t really suggest how an essentially preliterate farm culture, without any clear centralized organization or authority, creates and disseminates a system of cardinal directions at large scale. Thinking about the central, egalitarian, wholly natural *Alting* site still used by Icelanders today for yearly solstice ritual, the question arises whether some such place or places existed earlier in mainland Scandinavia. A cardinal system might have been determined by observation of the sun at ritual times *at a particular latitude and central place*, giving the construct its particular off-cardinal angle. A similar large scale source of site feature orientation is debated in Mesoamerican archaeology where off-cardinal angles may be related to some ancient association of calendrical time to zenith passage at a particular latitude, and perhaps even

particular place. The zenith occurs when the sun is vertically overhead, but only at lower latitudes.

The research gap between the idea of central ritual places in Scandinavia and discussions of Norse cosmology, most of which are based on the 13th century Saga writings of Snorri Sturluson in Iceland, is huge. Wellendorf (2006) and Brink (2004:297), among others, both feel there was no physical pattern of geometrically formal, abstract Norse cosmology on the larger landscape in Scandinavia. Yet, as seen in figure 2, abstract cross concepts clearly inform prehistoric brooches--as smallest scale physical settings. These patterns have a vertical

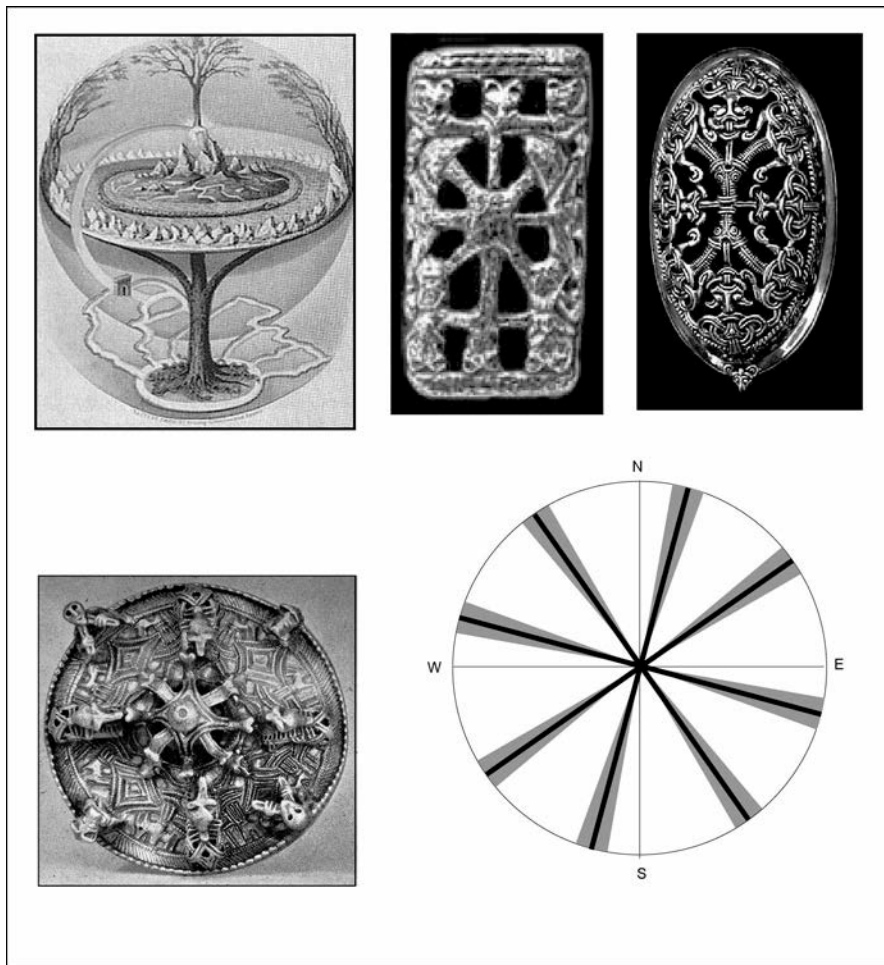


Figure 2. Finnur Magnusson's illustration of Yggdrasil world tree (above left), prehistoric Scandinavian brooches, superimposition of Lindstrom's (1997) "B" and "C" systems (lower right).

dimension associated with the world tree Yggdrasil; a linkage that also occurs in the forms of various kinds of Iron Age graves (Andrén 2004). Also included in Figure 2 is a composite cross diagram where both "B" and "C" systems from Lindström are combined to logically include both

solstice and equinox (Fall) times. The inclusion of the “intercardinal” directions is evident in the design of all three brooches.

It was not just graves that Bronze and Iron Age Scandinavians oriented according to some shared large scale off-cardinal system, but their most significant architecture, the farm longhouses in which they lived. Diagramming the longhouse orientations of one of the better known settlement excavations at Vallhagar (Stenberger 1955) on the island of Gotland, Sweden, their directions mirror Lindström’s “B” system as shown in figure 3. This settlement is Migration Period, two or three hundred years before the Vikings in the A.D. 800’s (both are “Iron Age”). Curiously, the “north-south” axes are much more clearly expressed than those “east-west”, though the voids in the diagram show at least a tentative complimentary relationship of the two.



Figure 3. Iron-Age longhouse orientations on Gotland, Sweden (from Stenberger 1955).

While dwelling orientations are easily diagramed, archaeologists have not developed a discourse about “systematic” concepts of paired directions *a la* Lindström. Nor does one find published orientation diagrams of the large memorial features called “ship-settings”, mostly from the middle and late Iron Age. These pairs of monolith rows shaped like a ship were unquestionably designed to orient “somewhere”. One of the largest at about 70 meters, Ales Stenar, sits majestically on a coastal cliff overlooking the Baltic in Southern Sweden. Its interpretative sign today describes discussion about its possible orientation to the direction of solstice rise and set phenomena at this latitude. Yet its orientation has not been included in any study of more systematic large-scale meanings.

Dwarfing the rest of the largest ship-settings such as Ales Stenar, one finds two 340 meter ship-shaped rows of monoliths riding beneath the two late Iron-Age memorial mounds, each about 70 meters in diameter, at the royal site of Jelling, Denmark. Given this association between mounds and ship, together with the practice of burying Viking chieftains in their ships in huge mounds such as Gokstad or Tune in Norway, one can easily chart these largest of oriented monuments. Layered over Lindström’s (combined) system, figure 4 shows a clear preference for the winter solstice sunrise axis among largest ship-settings or multiple mound sites, with an apparent perpendicular formed by that rival to Jelling as Scandinavia’s most impressive prehistoric site, Uppsala, Sweden. Jelling’s seemingly aberrant orientation might be due to its very late importance as a power center fusing Viking and Christian religions. The patterns illustrated here are not intended as archaeological research, only to make the point that a systematic pattern *might* exist among these sites at a Scandinavian scale.

Perhaps the most cross-like spatial expression in prehistoric Scandinavia, actually at landscape rather than “object” scales, are the late fortifications or “*borgs*” found mostly in Denmark and Southern Sweden. As seen in Figure 5, even the Jelling complex was enclosed by a wall (though not a berm), actually a parallelogram rather than circle. The geometry of the enclosing wall nonetheless created cross intersection lines and a center to the complex as a whole. In figure 5, the ship setting at Jelling is the diagonal aligned with the two mounds. The Lindström diagram accompanying the site aerials shows an apparent lack of relationship of *borg* orientations with the systematic pattern of mostly early ship-settings/multiple mound sites. These late Viking constructions, however, are clearly attempting to capture some religious meaning in a particularly stressful time of religious and territorial change. Again the pattern is a

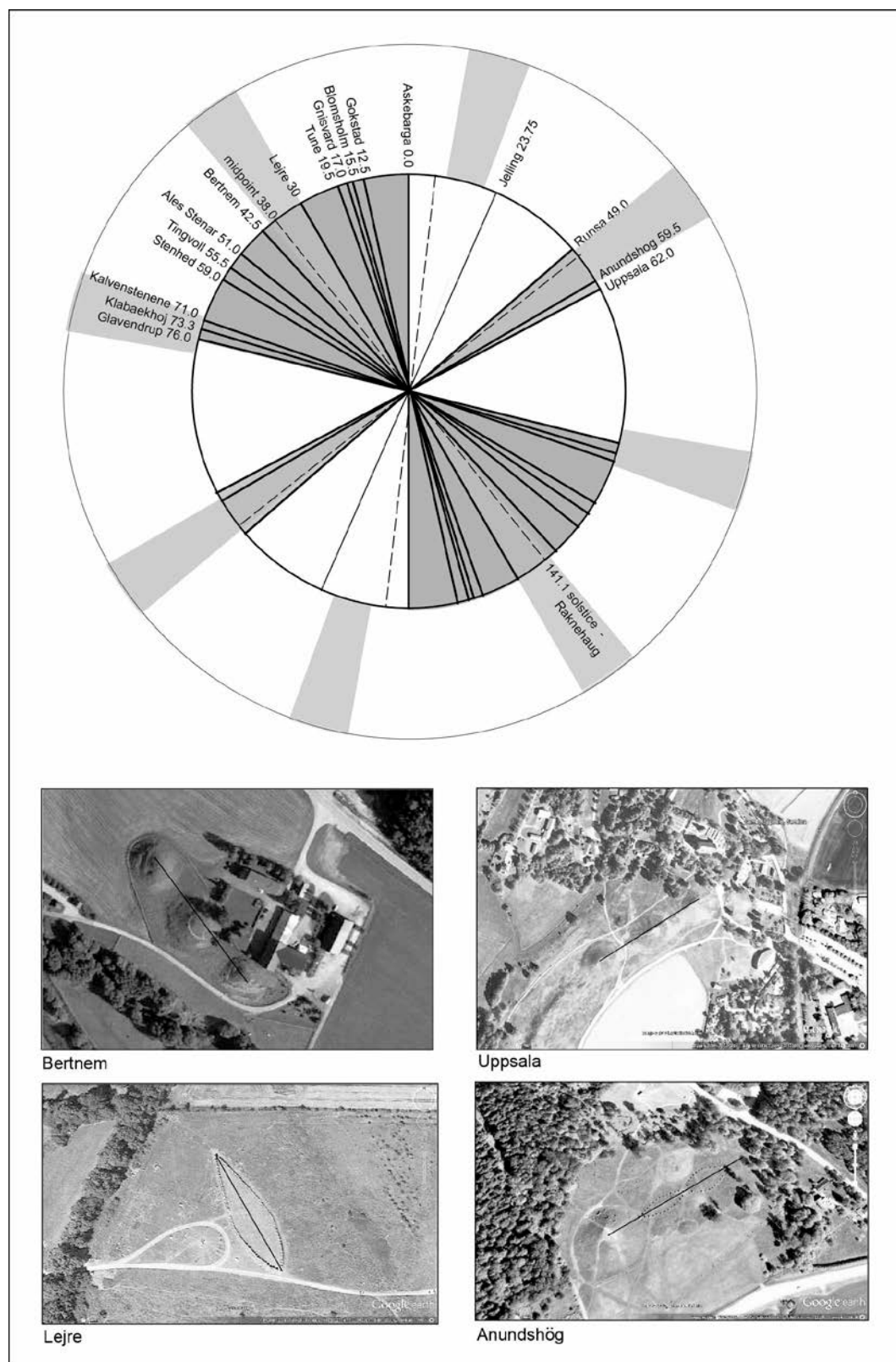


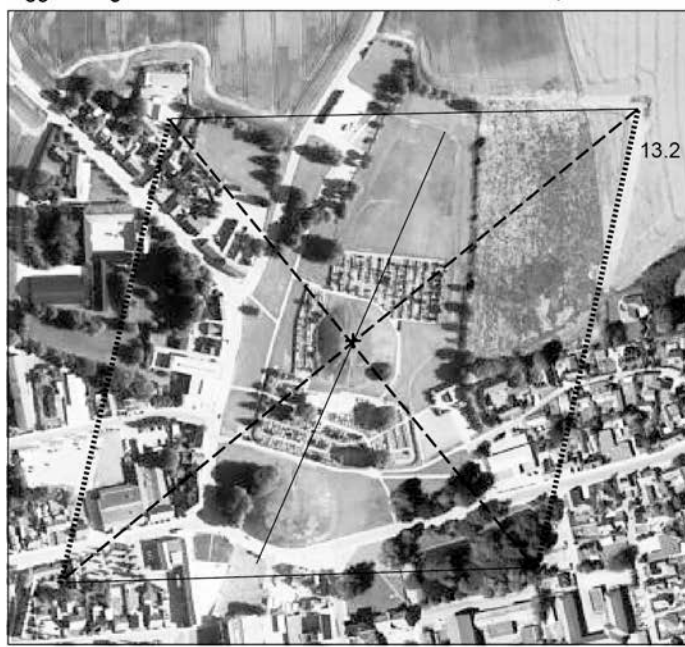
Figure 4. Orientations of largest “ship settings” and aligned mounds in Scandinavia.



Aggersborg



Fyrkat



Jelling

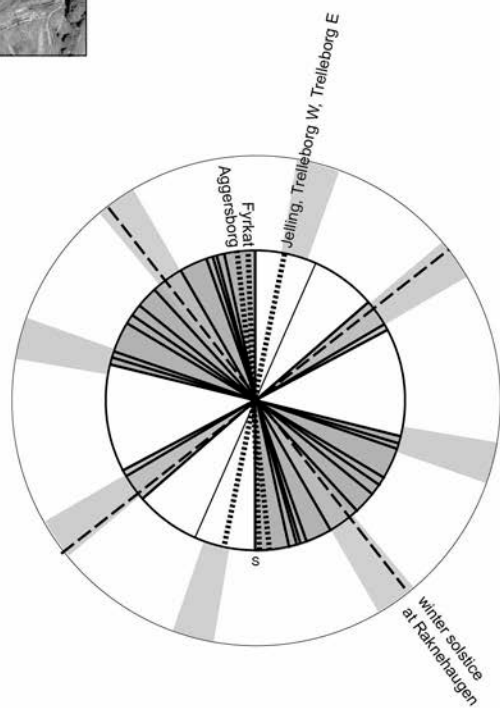
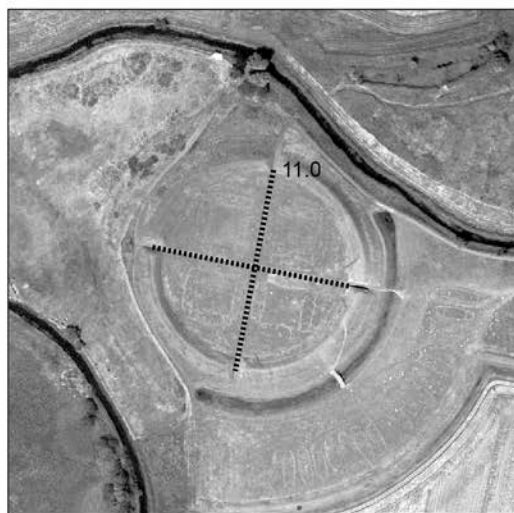
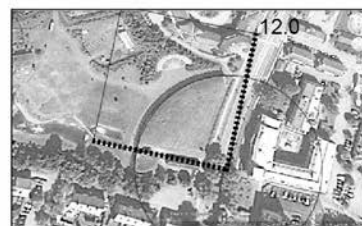


Figure 5. Orientations of "Trellebogs" and Jelling palisade in Denmark and Southern Sweden.



Trelleborg (W)



Trelleborg (E)

cross with a perpendicular relationship between two axes. Three of these skillfully laid out *borgs* are also precisely aligned over a length of 174.89 km. The center of the 185 meter Trelleborg (the best known of the *borgs*) is only off about 28 meters in alignment with Nonnebakken to the west and Trelleborg E (in Southern Sweden); the line between Nonnebakken and Trelleborg (Denmark) is about 0.15° from being true W-E. Again these large scale patterns have not been investigated.

Magnetic compasses were likely not used by Vikings or early Medieval Scandinavians, though some use of lodestones provided rough reckoning at sea. In the case of smaller deviations from true cardinal directions that we see in the *borgs*, the question of compass use is mute in any event. The magnetic deviation of compasses from true in most of Scandinavia is quite negligible, often less than one degree. As in most traditional cultures, especially in those with skills like the prehistoric Scandinavians, it was no great technical feat to find relatively accurate true cardinal directions from the observation of the sun. Given the precision of design in the *borgs*, the variations in their particular orientations (“cants”) must also have been designed for symbolic reasons.

The imposition of churches on the Scandinavian landscape

A raft of Scandinavian folklore thematically describes the conflict when early Christians--most often not invading outsiders but indigenous converts--begin to build churches on the land. Christians work on the building during the day, as the tales often recount, only to have the construction torn down at night by trolls (*hulder*) or other such beings associated with the landscape. Again no tradition of worshiping in temples in prehistoric Scandinavia existed, in spite of rare archaeological evidence of some sort of worship occurring on a very few sites built over by a church; e.g. Maere in the Trondheimsfjord area of Norway (Lidén 1969), or Uppsala in Sweden (Olsen 1966:117). The most significant religious constructions were huge earthen mounds, memorials sometimes entombing chieftain burials and ships. At smaller scales prehistorical burial mounds are commonly part of many farms, even today.

The Norwegian archaeologist Jan Brendalsmo has studied church location in the landscape as much as anyone (one of the authors previously cited in Stabbetorp et.al. 2007). In his 1997 article on the “*kristningen of landskapet*” (Christianizing the landscape) in medieval Sør-Trøndelag, Brendalsmo recognizes the sacredness of certain features of the pre-Christian

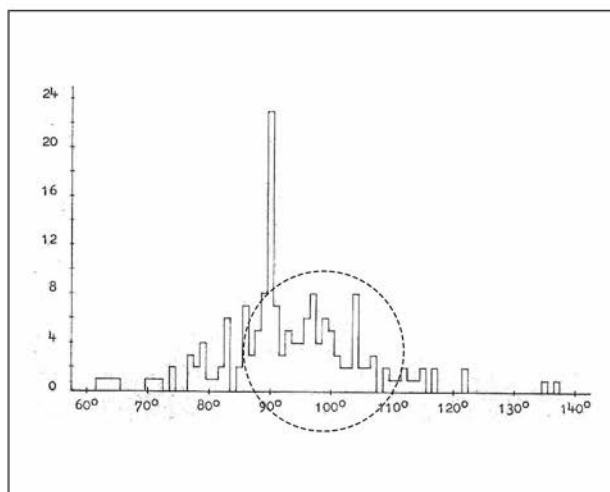
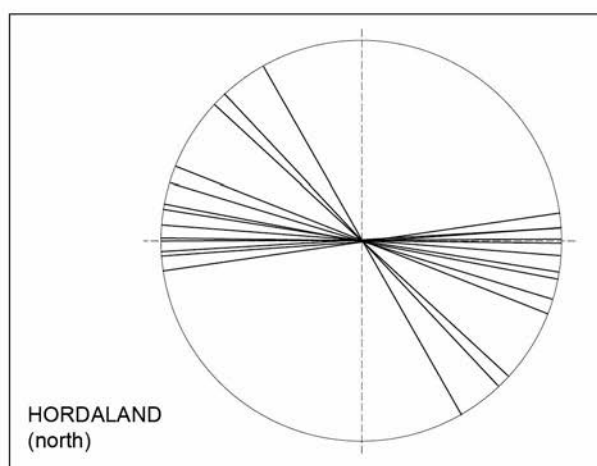
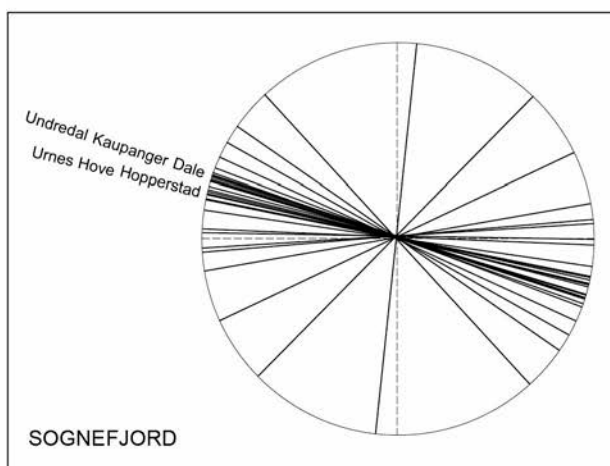
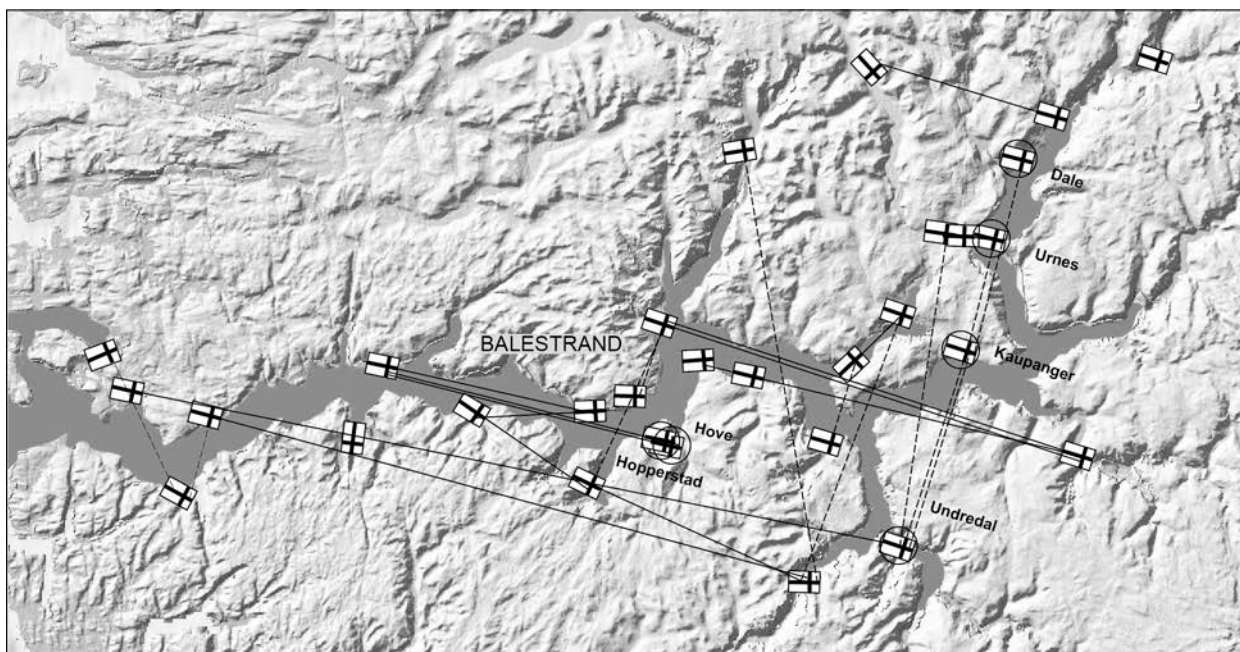


Figure 6. "Systematic" orientations of parish churches along Sognefjord; orientations of parish churches in northern Hordaland; and composite orientations of churches in Norway, lower left (from Eide 1974). Most churches on map are from Middle Ages; those with circles are earliest "stave churches"

landscape, but pays most attention to the siting of many churches on large central farms. While some were built at nodal points along main roads or fjords (no grid system), the majority were somewhat exclusively used by wealthier farmers (Brendalsmo 1997:18). He does not evaluate the orientation of these churches as part of the research. It has been widely assumed, perhaps based on Eide's (1974) orientation charts, that the vast majority of medieval churches in Norway generally run east-west, with no mention of any "system", as in Lindström.

Eide's diagram is included in brief diagrams of church orientations in perhaps Norway's largest and most singular landscape feature, Sognefjord (including Hordaland just to the south), figure 6, and the mountain region of Valdres (just to the east) figure 7. Clearly, the orientations of the predominantly medieval churches, and particularly the iconic stave churches or more rare two stone churches in Sognefjord mirrors a group diagrammed but not discussed by Eide, (off cardinal about 15°, entrances facing WNW). From Lindström's second paper (2005:17), the graves in his sample show greatest preference for this prehistoric direction (his "B" system), but some fall into a minority but still defined group at around 30°, which again he interprets related to an Easter sun rise direction and being Christian. The "cardinal" skewing of churches and graves in the Valdres valleys also follows Eide's diagram, with particularly the stave churches pointing to a preference at about 8° WNW. Northern Hordeland, for its part has no standing stave churches, but seems to echo the Valdres pattern. Thus these churches seem to represent a continuity with *some* prehistoric system, actually expressed both in church axis and parallel grave orientation. Almost all churches in this brief study are either medieval stave churches or buildings built on stave church sites, likely maintaining their orientation as evidenced from continuous grave orientations. Scandinavian emigrants from farm areas most likely practiced their state Lutheranism at a churchyard and building for all intents and purposes medieval, and originally Catholic.

In Cather's Nebraska, three cemeteries are aligned, and quite possibly the two church axes paralleled this east-west line (this is the case with standing St. Stephanie, though Zion's orientation is not readily apparent from aerials of the vacant area in front of the graves). In figure 6 and 7 each pair of perpendicular church orientations are extended across the landscape. Some of these lines, particularly those involving the standing stave churches, appear to connect church sites, with a possible preference for the two axes of the "B" system, particularly in Sognefjord. It is not impossible that a much more intensive investigation of these geometric relationships might

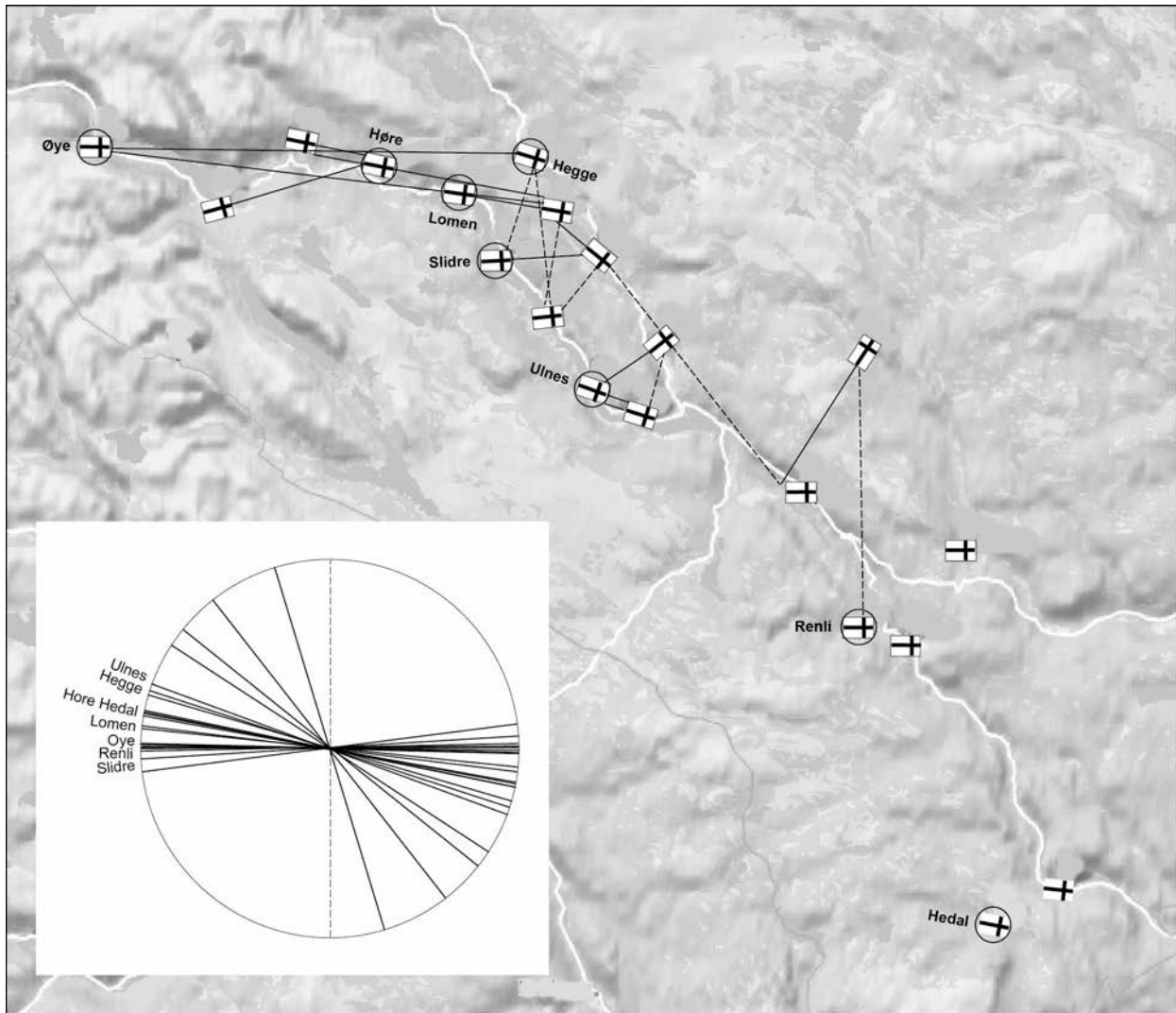


Figure 7. “Systematic” orientations of churches in Valdres, Norway. Most churches on map are from Middle Ages; those with circles are earliest “stave churches”.

reveal some larger scale framework that explains the system of church orientation. Such alignments might indicate ritual relationships between churches, perhaps adding a communal balance to Brendalsmo’s “elite” characterization of the many farms where churches were built. These alignments, however, if cartographically, historically and archaeologically proven, still might not identify the source or the scale of the system, just that it operated in a particular fjord or valley region.

Most of the early medieval churches in the region of Trondheimsfjord are stone rather than stave, perhaps indicative of the importance of an associated large farm. While again the orientation of these churches has not been “systematically” studied, though generally east-west,

the layouts of church and cemetery yard in some reveal a clear syncretic fusion of Viking and Christian perpendicular axes. Alstadhaug's location in the larger landscape was obviously sacred prehistorically, figure 8, though no comprehensive archaeological report exists for the site. The church lies immediately to the south of one of the largest (50m) memorial mounds along the region. In Nordic symbolism, north was the most powerful direction of the spirits, not just from the Icelandic sagas, but from the mapping of traditional “folk” period farms that follows. A fundamental conflict occurred between an indigenous North, and East, the conventional direction

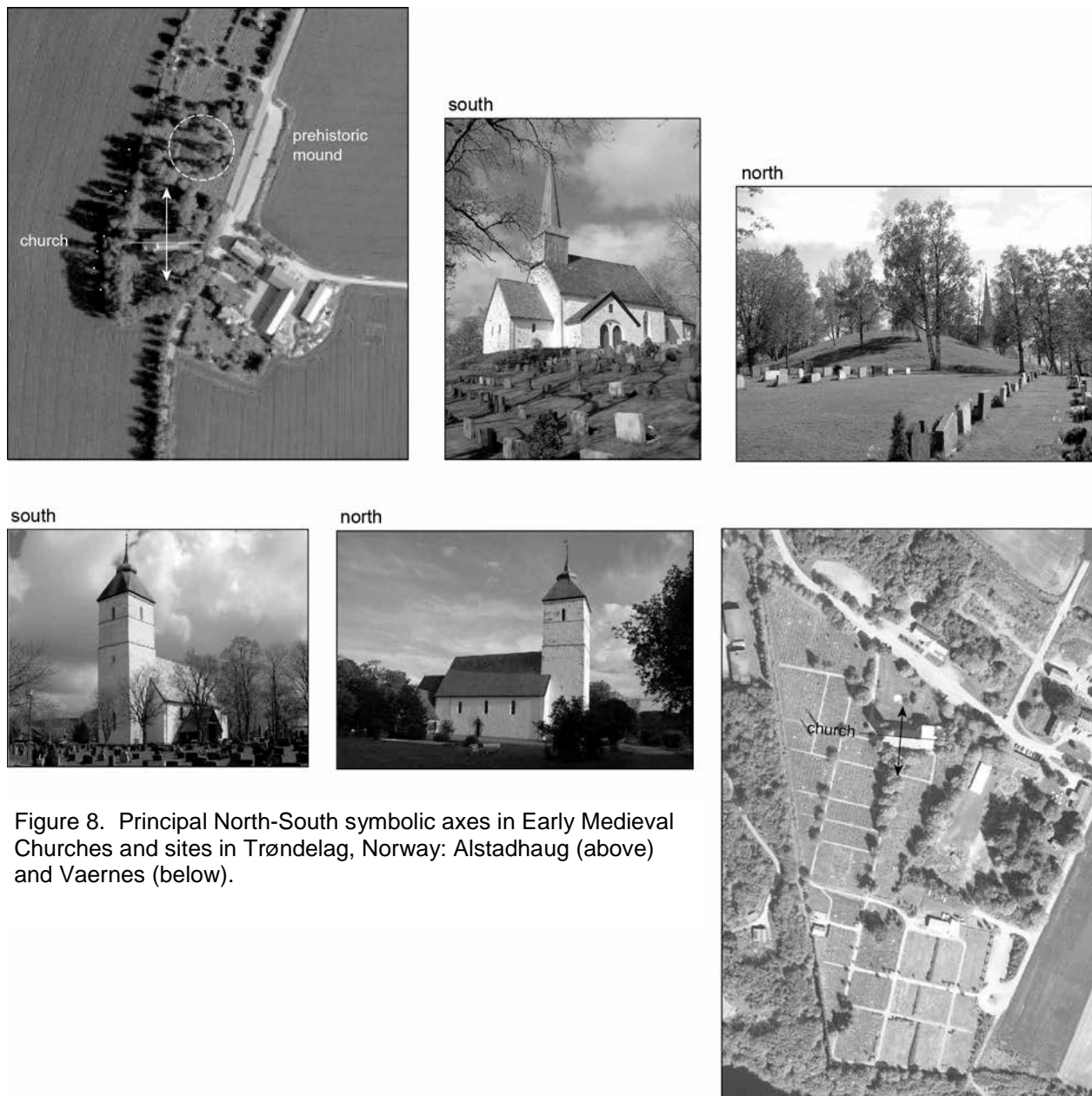


Figure 8. Principal North-South symbolic axes in Early Medieval Churches and sites in Trøndelag, Norway: Alstadhaug (above) and Vaernes (below).

of Christian rebirth most often expressed by the altar end of the church nave. The first act in solving this symbolic problem at Alstadhaug appears to have been an agreement to orient the nave east-west according to Pan-Christian canon. But the entrances, primary thresholds separating humans and spirits, reveal an indigenous dimension of ritual practice.

The oldest part of the Alstadhaug cemetery lies south of the church, with the principal entrance from that direction; no highly symbolic West entrance exists as occurred ubiquitously in Gothic Cathedrals being built across the rest of Europe at the time. The small door on the north wall of the nave completes the dominant spirit axis of the site, connecting graveyard to the south, through church nave, to memorial mound on the north side of the church—perhaps considered the most powerful point on the site. A similar site layout can be found at the larger stone church at Værnes, also with no west entrance, the principal entrance from the south graveyard, and a small door on the north wall. A very large prehistoric gravefield in this long powerful location at the center of the fjord lay less than a kilometer northwest of the church. The gravefield was destroyed when the Germans expanded the airfield during their occupation of Norway. Many other examples of association of Christian church locations and axes with a Norse “cosmos” exist, most prominent of which are the churches right in or adjacent to the mounds at Jelling and Uppsala.

Cross symbolism and ritual practices in Norwegian farm life

Ritual layouts of farms may have expressed Yggdrasil, the mythic world tree, embodied as a real tree growing on a prehistoric grave mound, *haug*, see photo in figure 9. Several sources place this powerful feature to the north or center of the group of farm buildings or *tun*, not unlike the great mound at Alstadhaug. At the farm of Konnismo, the old *haug* tree as offering site reportedly was situated in the middle of the farm (Storaker 1928:33) or near the house (ibid:35). Saga sources indicate the direction of an Icelandic farm burial mound but nothing is said about a tree; a ship buried in a mound lies north of the farm in Landnamabok (1972:52). Again in Norway, Bø & Hodne (1974:104) describe a Setesdal site where the holy tree and mound lie directly north of the farm. They further describe an 11th century account of a *haug* lying just north of a Telemark farm (ibid:106). If one didn’t give the farm spirit, *Nisse*, his ale on Thursday at his mound (“Thor’s” day, or old center day of the week), the logs of the *stue* would suddenly begin to separate revealing to humans inside the frightening bloody eyes and hands of the spirit

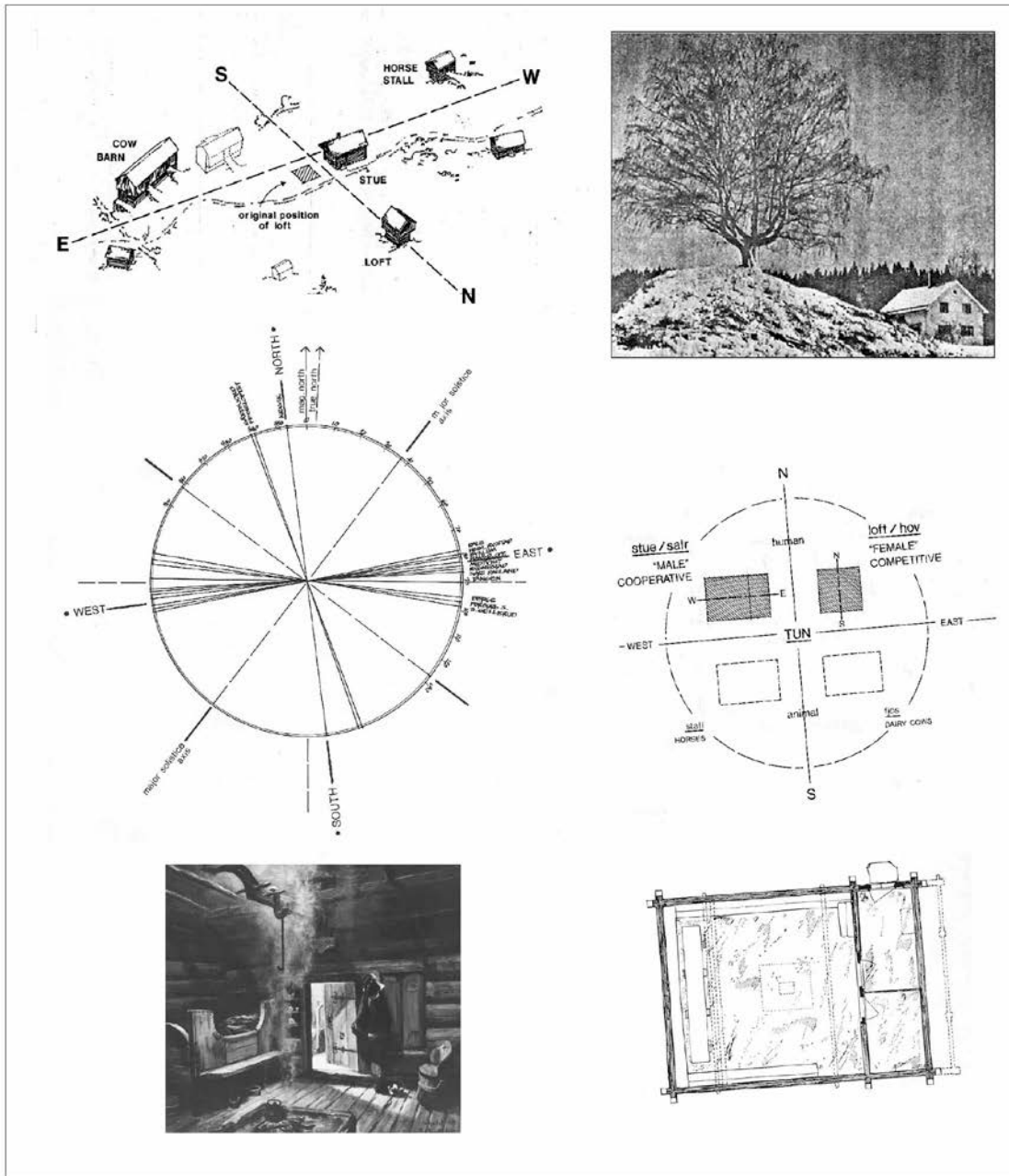


Figure 9. Søre Rauland farm layout, Norway, upper left (from a sketch by Arne Berg 1968:64); “tun” tree, upper right (unidentified farm, Hammar Norway, photo in *Aftenposten* Dec. 8, 1976); systematic orientations of Early Middle Ages “stues” in Setesdal, Norway, middle left; symbolic meanings of the four quadrants of *tuns*, middle right; plan of *stue* at Søre Rauland (now at the folk museum Bygdøy), lower right.

(Christiansen 1911:185). The most grievous of sins among farmers was to strike with an ax or otherwise injure the *tuntre* (Storaker 1928:32). Note that much of this belief was collected close to the emigration period at the turn of the last century, as historians sought to record Norway's rich folk culture.

In effect, a spatial opposition existed between a spiritual being associated with a natural mound and tree (North) and the architectural settings used most actively by humans (South). The *tun* is subordinate to the *haug*. This same spatial symbolism reproduces within the *tun* at the next smaller scale in the farm. Human buildings (North) now oppose and dominate animal buildings (South), as evident in the layout of Søre Rauland, also in figure 9 (the original site of the oldest *stue* in the Bygdøy Folkmuseum). Doxtater 1981 (chapter V) extensively documents the “cosmology” of the *tun* from folk literature. The skewed orientations of the oldest *stues* in Setesdal, diagramed in figure 9, could be some variant of a cardinal-like system.

Right-angle opposition between dwelling orientations exhibits continuity from Viking to Folk Periods. Characteristically the “female” north-south *loft* lies to the East and represents the competitive and fertility aspects of the farm society, symbolically linked perhaps to Middle Ages guilds and prehistoric *hov* (special farm buildings associated with warriors and wealth). To the West is the east-west domestic *stue*, with its emphasis on collective male relationships between farmers, particularly at the *fest* table along the west end. As in the larger scale axis between *tun* and *haug*, entrances to both *stue* and *loft* lie on north-south axes and are guarded by symbolic threshold features articulating contact between spirits (North) and humans (South). Just as the horizontal *haug-tun* axis was also a vertical conception between above (heaven) and below (earth), within the *tun* the vertical *axis mundi* occurred at the central *stue* hearth with its smoke opening, *ljore*, directly above, image in figure 10.

A multitude of folk beliefs express *axis mundi* (cross structure) at several scales of farm layout, both horizontal and vertical, as *the* means of controlling contact between humans and spirits. Movement involving the turning of axels, such as churning butter or spinning wool (Storaker 1921:11,23), were defined by lore that served to protect the user from inadvertent contact with spirits. Often the structure of time is clearly linked to spatial direction and center *axis mundi*. If a woman of the farm, for example, dared to spin wool at midnight (vertical, north), the bloody hand of a deceased female relative would appear in a threatening gesture (Storaker 1923:34). To get the most butter one should churn just before midday or midnight

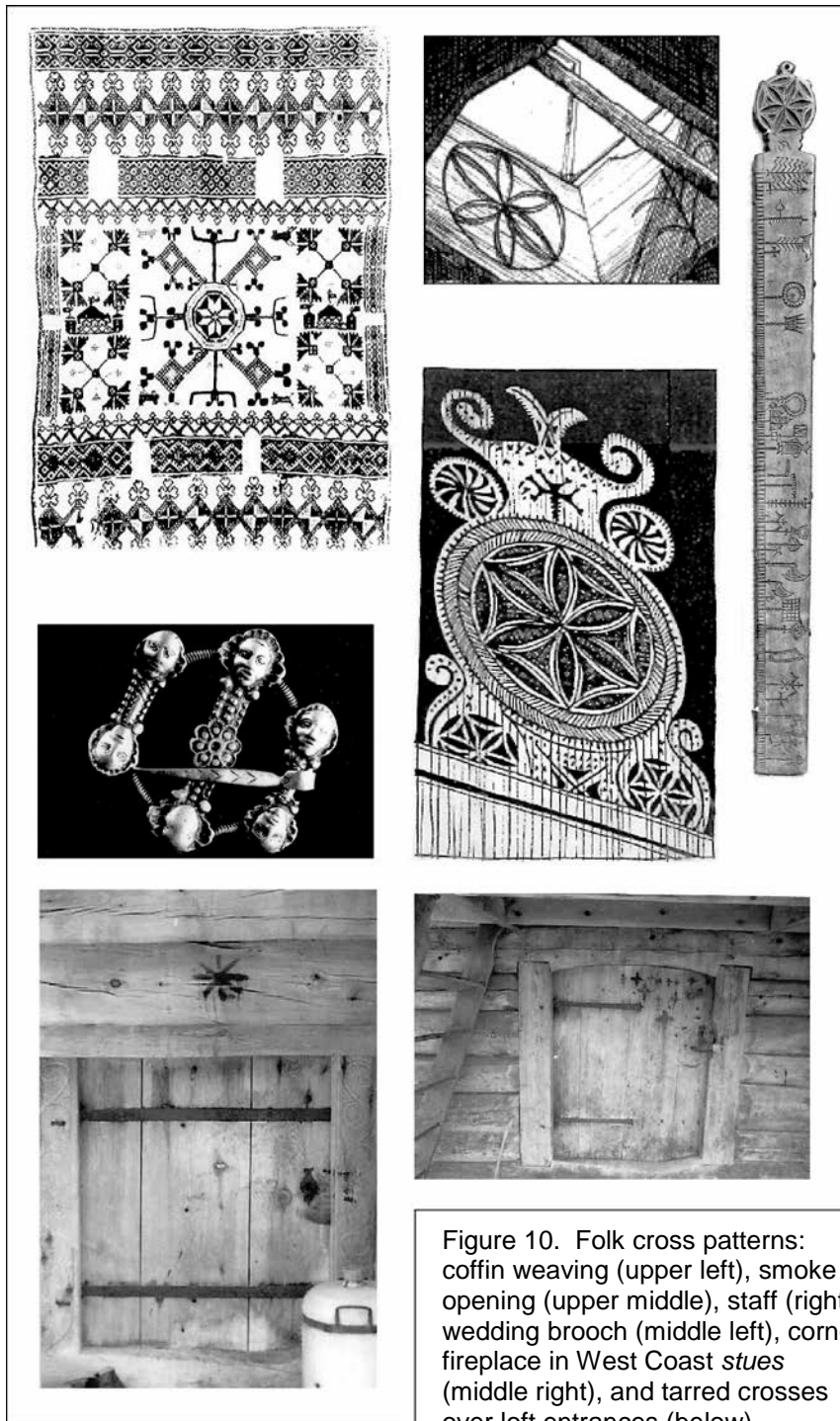


Figure 10. Folk cross patterns: coffin weaving (upper left), smoke opening (upper middle), staff (right), wedding brooch (middle left), corner fireplace in West Coast *stues* (middle right), and tarred crosses over loft entrances (below).

(Storaker 1921 tid: 11). More butter could be produced by placing the churn midway under the cross-beam (center element in the West Coast “smoke” *stue*) (ibid: 40).

These symbolic frameworks were more importantly powerful settings for ritual, whether calendrical, in the case of *Midsommer* and *Jul*, or rites of passage for birth, marriage, and death.

When a person died in the *stue*, the smoke vent over the central open hearth was tilted open to let the spirit of the deceased pass to the other world (Christiansen 1956:17). This vertical act was followed by a perhaps more important horizontal, ritual sequence. In the *stue*, the body was first washed on a bed of straw in preparation for the funeral. Stigum describes:

...then out came he who carried the straw followed by a procession in loud song. The direction of the procession was to a small mound, north of the *stue*. They stood in a ring around the straw while it burned. The red glow of the fire told all that there was a death; the fire burned quickly then died. The procession then returned to the *stue*. (Stigum 1971:339-342).

In wedding rites, after the bride was “freed” from the center position of her family *stue*, all passed through the north-south *stue* threshold, transforming the wedding party to the other world. With guns in hand to protect from dangerous spirits, the party traveled, often by boat, to the collective natural site of the community; church sites played this role (Stigum 1971 vol I:422). Here, after passing through another threshold with the approbation of the gods or priest, whether or not one was available, they transformed back into the world of humans. Ale would flow and the mood became joyful. The spatial scale of the wedding journey now involves the most important collective site, perhaps in prehistoric times the *horg*, a natural site distinct to farm associated *hov* (Olsen 1966:59).

[A number of first log dwellings built by Norwegian immigrants in Minnesota still exist on farms today, though most are gone. The plan layout and orientation of these structures has not been comprehensively researched, if in fact enough remain in their original form and location to do so. In the lone publication found on the subject (Linebaugh 2014), the dwelling in SW Minnesota is described as belonging to the basic three-room *stue* pattern that existed for more than 700 years in Norway.]

While contact with the all-powerful north-south axis does the symbolic work in rites of passage, the two calendrical rites of *Jul* and *Midsommer* speak to a fundamental relationship between individual farm families and the community. Expressed as opposites, at least in folk periods, Storaker (1924:112) describes the fire on the heights or natural site at *Jonsok* (summer) that related to the community or *bygde*, while the hearth, with its emphasis at *Jul* (winter), was

the holy altar for house and home. At *Jul*, Odin and his entourage rose out of the mountainous north and swooped down on the individual farm and *stue* (Birkeli 1943:174). Called the *Oskoreia* in folklore it is depicted as a “wild hunt” and a darker side of *Jul*, figure 11. Its human inhabitants vacated the dwelling after setting a table for the occupying spirits (this tradition is expressed in the Bergman film *Fanny & Alexander*, a period piece set around 1910 Sweden). The collective gods were clearly dominant over the individual farm and family.



Figure 11. “Julereia” painting by Nils Bergslien 1922: spirits from mountains and hills visiting farms and causing mischief for people found outside at *Jul* (midwinter); ritual “occupation” expressing subordination of communal spirits over individual farms.



Figure 12. “Midsummer Eve Bonfires” painting by Nikolai Astrup: farmers gathering together to commune with spirits in nature; ritual “union” expressing the fusion of individual farms into community.

The opposite calendrical ritual and social effect occurred at *Midsommer* when the community would journey to the collective natural site. The midsummer fire was built with a pillar in the center with a cross arm attached near the top (Bø & Noss 1967:124). Wood, piled all around the pillar was set afire at midnight (Storaker 1921:216). A fiddler provided tempo, as the *grend* or *bygd* danced around the flaming cross structure. In the early hours of the morning, a special *graut* (*gomme*), cooked over the coals, provided the collective finale to the rite (Bø & Noss *ibid*). Symbolically a kind of communion, the spiritual essence of the transformational fire and natural place reintegrated into the bodies of the *bygd*. Bourdieu speaks of these kinds of ritual as “union” to which their opposite of “occupation” may logically be added (see Doxtater 1991).

Returning to beliefs about spiritual contact at crossroads in Nebraska and Europe, at the time of peak emigration in folk Norway reverence for these landscape points might be seen as remnants of some more extensive system of ritual—beyond practices at the farm mound/tree or Midsummer gathering at a natural site. In Gjerde’s seminal volume on socio-economic issues in emigration from the Balestrand area in Sognefjord, he recounts the following:

“If a maid wished to know her future husband, she went out to a crossroads the first time she saw the moon in February. There she would turn around three times and say ‘Tell me the name of the man I shall get.’ She then returned to the farmyard and did not move until an unmarried man’s name was mentioned. He would be her husband. Once an engagement was contracted, she could also determine her material prospects with her betrothed on Christmas Eve. She put three bowls on the table, one with beer, one with milk, and one with water. At midnight her fiancé came into the dark room and drank one of the bowls. If he drank the beer, he would be a drunkard; if he drank the water, he would be poor; but if the milk was drunk, he would be rich” (Gjerde 1985:53)

At play here is the clear opposition between powerful natural point (crossroads) and subordinate farm dwelling (*stue*). Even though the overall motive wants to predict and perhaps influence a new, prosperous “individual” farm family, the power to do so comes from “collective” sites in the landscape. In addition to crossroads power, the setting out of bowls at Christmas Eve for the midnight visitor replicates the largest scale ritual occupation of the dwelling at this time by major gods coming out of mountains to the north (*Oskoreia*).

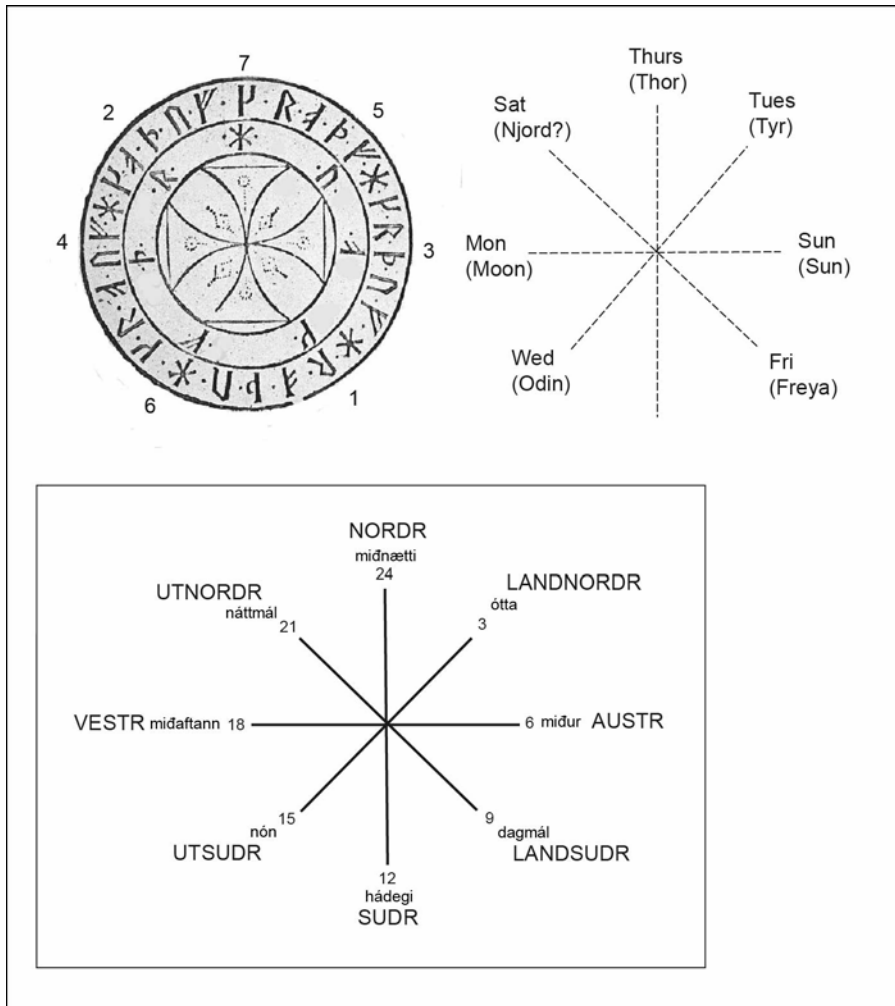


Figure 13. Olaus Worms' 17th century reproduction of a Swedish *runestave* from the 1300's (Byrnejulf 1970): seven *runes* on inner circle designate days of the week; their sequence creates a spatialized cross structure of time with Thor's day as the vertical *axis mundi* or center axis; the sequence begins with the winter solstice direction. Lower diagram is conception of daily time on Saga Iceland (Gordon 1927:211).

Concepts of time in Late Viking and “folk” periods included inter-cardinal directions, figure 13. On Saga Iceland, eight spatial orientations structured the day (Gordon 1927:211). Storaker's exhaustive collection of later folklore includes many oppositions between Day and Night and Summer and Winter (e.g. 1921:6), both sets expressed as north-south halves of the clock-like pattern. An early representation of “spatialized” time can be understood in Olaus Worm's 17th century reproduction of a Swedish *runestave* from the 1300's (Byrnejulf 1970:40). Figure 13 also illustrates positions of the seven days of the week (Norse gods) around the inner circle of the calendar. Their sequence, beginning with Friday (Freya), the first day after the old “center” day

of Thursday (Thor), crisscrosses back and forth across the circle, ultimately climaxing with the vertical or *axis mundi* of Thursday itself.

The numerous examples of non-Christian “cross” symbolism described above show strong continuity from Viking through Medieval and Post-Reformation folk culture and up to some point in the not so distant Norwegian past. Today’s Scandinavians most likely understand only vestiges of their extensive prehistorical and historical use of cross or center spatial symbolism. One finds an almost complete absence of related interpretation at folk museums (the *stue* shown in figure 9, for example was not correctly oriented when moved to Bygdøy in the early 1900s). Interesting exceptions in this regard are the “cosmic” layouts of Frogner Park with its Gustav Vigeland sculptures in Oslo, and the Woodland cemetery in Stockholm with their long cardinally oriented visual axes crossing at a center obelisk or natural mound respectively. When visiting the Frogner Park on one occasion, the author spoke with staff about the use of the park. Somewhat surprisingly visitors from South Korea were among the most enthusiastic about the experience. Abstract directional symbolism is still practiced at various spatial scales including contemporary dwellings in Korea (not totally unrelated to Feng Shui use in China).

How did use of these ancient spatial concepts eventually devolve as Scandinavia began to modernize with industrialization and urban loci, national identity, all in a context of state Lutheranism? Perhaps the most striking example of change in essentially landscape concepts, though still maintaining the structure of cross or center, was the reorientation of the traditional three-part farm *stue*. As more fully detailed in Doxtater (1990), during the latter part of the 17th and through the 18th centuries the ridge direction of newly built *stues* during this period swings generally 90°, now running North-South, an orientation formerly reserved for the *loft* structure. Some of these *stues* have second floors also laid out in the traditional three part plan, identical to the first floor. In spite of work on the original *stue* and its ritual use (Doxtater 1981), this major change in dwelling orientation was commented on by others primarily in non-symbolic terms. The most common assertion maintains that the addition of windows in the *stue* at this time caused the building to be rotated for greater solar gain. No serious energy studies, however, have yet proved this idea. Nor have these *stues* been thoroughly mapped with respect to serious valley topography and its influence on solar exposure, or more immediately with respect to the need to orient the *tun* for functional purposes of throwing manure out of the animal buildings. Whether

or not the rest of the buildings at the farm core were reoriented when a new *stue* was built also remains to be studied.

Far beyond the simple solar assertion, one could devote a volume to the symbolism introduced by these new thresholds in the sacred protective domain of the dwelling. Given the rich elaboration of traditional *stue* entrance, formerly facing south on the axis with north, windows became rife with “superstition” not unlike that of crossroads. By looking through them at auspicious times one could see into the other world or the future, e.g. again to image the person one was going to marry. This does not mean that windows did not provide needed task related light to the interior space, but that cross symbolism remained quite strong at this time. Most likely a major change in dwelling orientation would have had some ritual purpose as its principal cause—not the questionable effect of heat gain from these very small openings.

What changed in folk practice? The Medieval syncretism of Norse and Christian directional symbolism in the churches illustrated in figure 8 has been discussed. This may have been less problematic at the time since rite-of-passage rituals still took place in the primary ritual setting, the *stue*, whose orientation remained consistent with prehistoric traditions. But the big-man overtones of church use in the Catholic period changed with the new authority of the state Lutheran ministry. Pews, as seen in the photos of figure 14, were now erected in churches with men and women on opposite (north and south) sides and an emboldened position of the minister associated with the male and most spiritually powerful eastern direction. This, along with liturgical changes, had the effect of moving the primary ritual site from *stue* to church. Hypothetically the *stue* rotated 90° to finally become symbolically and ritually consonant with the primary religious “temple” (not unlike the spatially “homologous” relation between dwellings and communal ritual sites in many traditional cultures). As shown in figure 14, the symbolic domains of the most frequently used setting, the dwelling, now feed associational power via their orientations to practice in the church setting. Such orientation change in Scandinavian dwelling in the 17th and 18th centuries is not new to archaeologists who document such swings in much earlier periods depending on whether farm groups were calling themselves “Viking” or “Christian” at the turn of the first millennium (e.g. see Parker-Pearson 1993, 2006)

The distinct possibility that cross concepts were being coordinated between dwelling and church across a valley or fjord landscape, however, does not in itself suggest large scale symbolic alignments between dwellings and churches. Farms in Norway, particularly, are located where

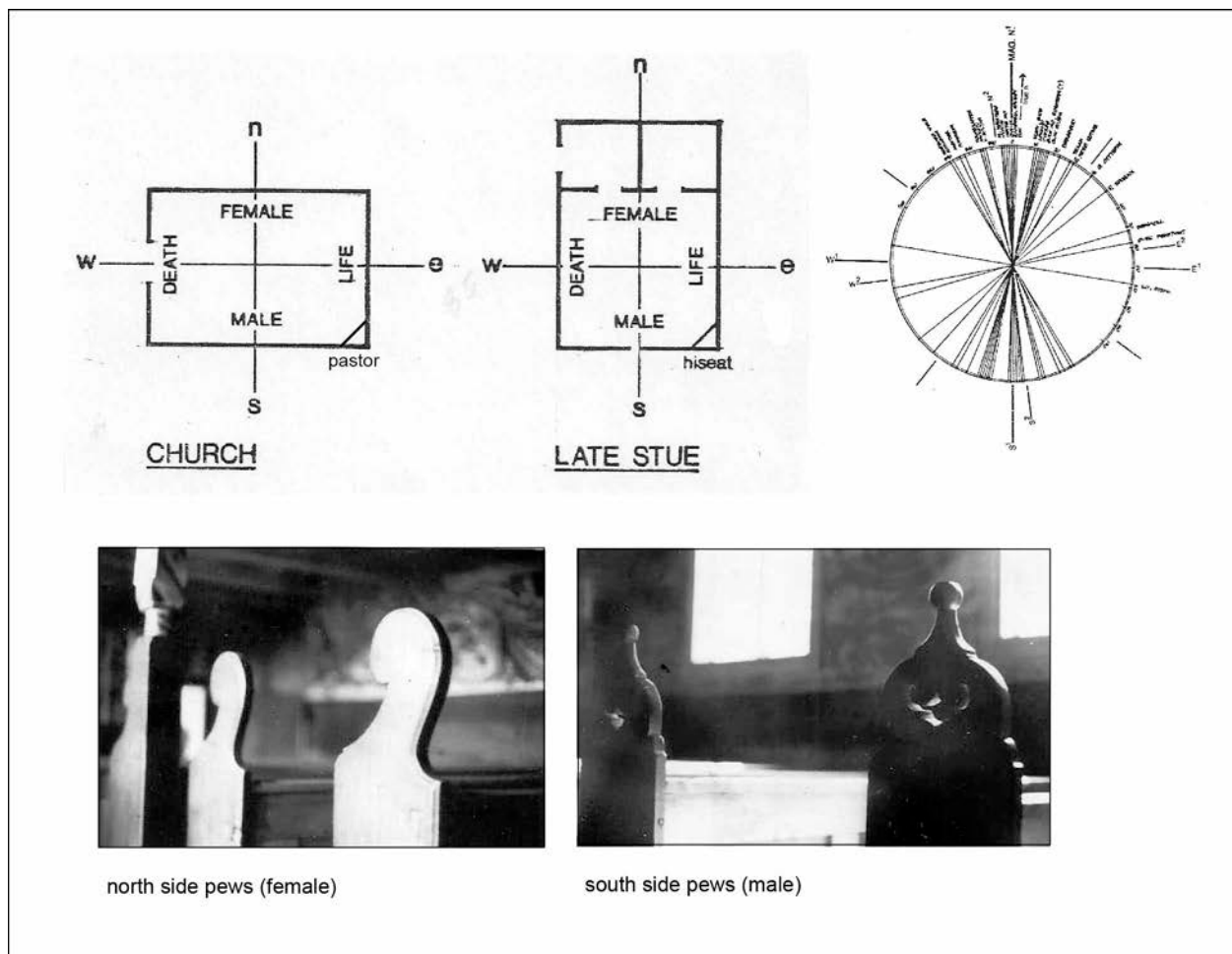


Figure 14. Eighteenth-nineteenth century reorientation of farm *stue* to be ritually consistent with Lutheran church in Norway after the Reformation (from Doxtater 1990). Photos from church in Setesdal showing different sculptural forms on north and south sides (photos by author).

they can work the soil; it would be impossible to connect all dwellings in this manner to their churches. Yet, just as in Iron Age times and probably before, the mental map of the ritually important dwelling wants to be transferable to places where larger, more collective rituals take place. Even in Medieval Scandinavia natural *Ting* sites may have provided continuity in this respect, some still being used after the Reformation. The Christian church, both as institution and building, was for a long time somewhat less integrated with landscape based ritual. The change of the physical structure of church buildings was part and parcel to the gradual emergence of a more literate, and less spatially influenced process of religion—short lived as the rotated traditional meanings of the *stue* and its symbolic orientations were to be.

At the time of greatest emigration to Minnesota, during the later decades of the 19th century, increasing numbers of new farm dwellings were no longer built according to the

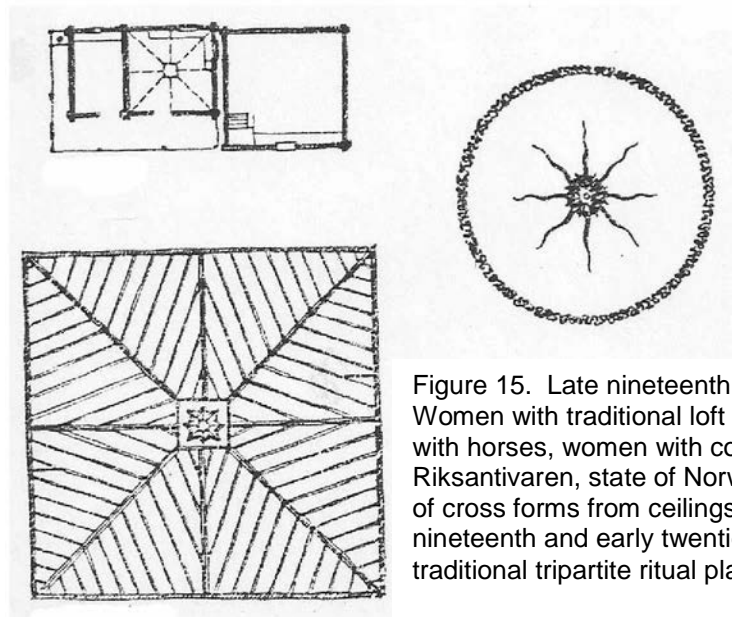
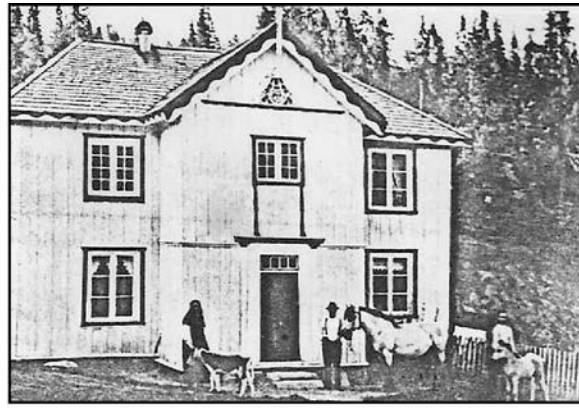


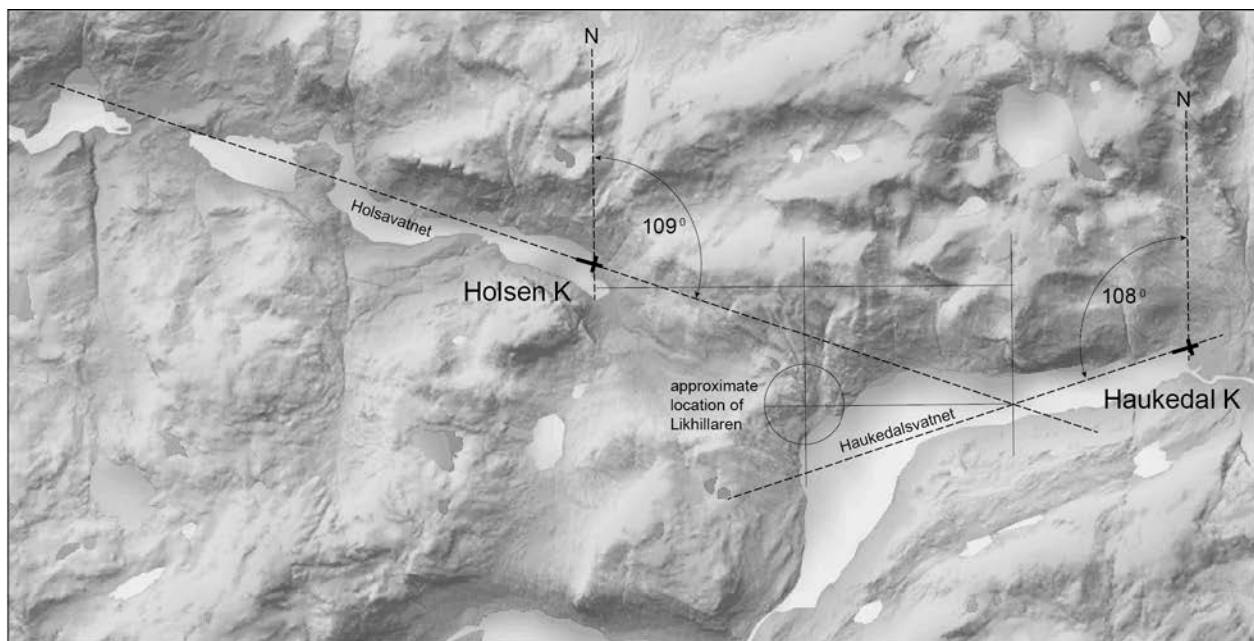
Figure 15. Late nineteenth century male-female symbolism: Women with traditional loft and its threshold, left; men with horses, women with cows, right (photos from Riksantivaren, state of Norway). Below: reproductions of cross forms from ceilings in dwellings built in the latter nineteenth and early twentieth century (no longer with traditional tripartite ritual plan).

traditional ritual plan. Many emigrants, however, not only attended medieval churches, but lived in either *stues* of the same age or those reoriented 90°. Occasional square rooms and motifs that speak to cross structures, figure 15, is about the only symbolism left in the plans and decoration of new *stues* built in Norway during the emigration period. Likely gone are the actual ritual practices, though perhaps not folk beliefs, associated with directions and thresholds. The early 1900's photos included in figure 15 reveal old associations of "Female" between women of the farm as they stood on the entrance to *their* symbolic building the *loft*. In front of the farm house, not a traditional three-part log building, the man of the farm holds the reins of the "Male" farm animal the horse, while his wife tethers the "Female" cow. Were this an exterior photo of a Lutheran church at the time, analogously, men would sit on the right side and women on the left. Today in Norway many farms have traditional out buildings and one can find 13th century log *stues* with planed lumber cladding on most visible sides—still being lived in. Often, however,

most evident remnants of rich spatial and symbolic past exist at the level of signs, rather than as part of any ritual context. Stylized *loft* buildings, for example, perhaps even prefabricated, now are likely to be sited where they can be prominently seen from the road. The *loft* or *stabbur* image provides the logo for a national super market chain.

Social structure of the farm landscape

The ethnography of historic Norwegian farms well defines social groups in a landscape context. These folk practice collective rituals at symbolically opposed individual farmsteads and natural sites, particularly for calendrical celebrations like Summer Solstice. Abstract “cross” concepts frame ritual at both kinds of settings. The role of church groups either as congregations or lay councils are much less evident, aside from providing the consecrated place of burial (also with cross symbolism) and locus of state administration.



Holsen 1861



Haukedal 1885



Figure 16. Locations and orientations of Holsen and Haukedal churches north of Sognefjord, Norway: formal geometric patterns between the two involving the historic coffin stop Likhillaren. Church photos from open web sources.

The fjord-like Holsen-Haukedal landscape of figure 16, with its steep valley faces, has likely been farmed continuously for several thousand years, from about 2100 B.C. up to “Christian” times in about 1200 A.D. (Utgravingsprosjekt Bjørset-Skei 2014). Farmers lived in well-constructed dwellings and out buildings, grew crops on scarce infields, raised cattle on open summer and winter grazing areas and cut timber from surrounding forests. They fished mainly in fjords and along coasts. Again, no documentation of any typical prehistoric architectural “temple” exists during these three millennia. Pre-Christian burials occurred either adjacent to farmsteads or in shared cemeteries at natural settings which varied between Bronze and Iron Ages. Burial sites shifted to churchyards in the early Middle Ages.

Medieval literature refers to a very small stave church at a Holsen farm for the first time in 1360; it was torn down sometime after 1722. The iconic stave churches in Norway exhibit prehistoric technology in ship-like structures with vertical wooden pillars, exteriors clad in shingles and tarred for preservation. The existing white frame church built in 1861 replaced an interim structure after the stave church was torn down. No archaeological record exists for the original stave church site or orientation, but the present church reportedly was moved 100 m. west of the original site because of flooding reasons [Sogn og Fjordane Fylke online archives for Holsen Church 2013]. For about three hundred years the Holsen cemetery with its small stave structure served a parish that included both lakes shown in figure 16, Holsavatnet and Haukedalsvatnet, an overall distance of roughly 20 km. One reality of this parish landscape is that people farming along Haukedalsvatnet at times had difficulties traveling up and down the high pass between the two lakes to get to the church. The most critical event was the delivery of a coffin to the cemetery. With bad weather, darkness, or deep snow, the coffin would be left at a designated place called “Likhillaren” (body hill) (ibid). Even when Haukedal created its own cemetery and church toward the end of the 1600s, for over two hundred years hence the vicar only came twice a year. Since 1866, time of existing church construction, services have taken place about once a month.

Fylke (county) archives also provide a glimpse of death ritual in Haukedal. The community, not church, took care of funerals. Rites involved “singing out” the dead body from the dwelling; then the coffin journeyed to the churchyard for burial. Pastoral contributions to the ceremony had to wait until the next church service. Somewhat in the vein of more ancient landscape ritual, a fusion of midsummer (solstice) and mass is even today celebrated in Haukedal

as well as other valleys. The archives do not tell us whether a vicar presides or whether the rite takes place in the church or natural setting.

The standing churches in Holsen and Haukedal built in 1861 and 1886 could have provided some experience in building and orienting structures in Minnesota. Population expansion, the primary push behind emigration, also created a need for more interior church space. Over 600 new larger churches were built in Norway during the second half of the 19th century. Most frequently, however, these replaced about 400 earlier churches in the same location, as at Holsen. Even in this parish (which still includes Haukedal) where new churches replaced existing ones, geometric pattern can be found that suggests design choice in building orientations and perhaps even location, particularly in the case of Haukedal.

The new and moved Holsen church might have echoed the orientation of its stave church predecessor. Referring back to figure six, the strong common direction of Sogn churches, just to the south of Holsavatnet, is about 16° off true west-east, or NNW-SSE. From detailed site drawings in *Norgeskart* service, the Holsen structure runs about 3° from this norm or 19°, quite close if superimposed over the Sogn group. Haukedal's axis, for its part, maps fairly accurately as a complement to Holsen with respect to true north, i.e. it projects the opposite west-east orientation at about 18°, SSW – NNE. Were these two orientations coordinated with each other through actual surveying (perhaps during the winter when the lakes were iced over), creating something of an inter-cardinal cross structure, unifying the two components of the parish? Or perhaps they just oriented the churches to their respective lake directions which coincidentally created the seemingly formal geometry?

The author was unable to obtain a precise data point for Likhillaren, but if it lies on or close to the existing road between the two domains of the parish landscape, it could be involved in a unified design layout in the latter half of the 1800's. If the Holsen orientation came first, then a true east-west (unifying) line could have been surveyed from Likhillaren. Its intersection with the Holsen axis on Haukedalsvatnet could then have been the point from which the complementary Haukedal church location and orientation was determined. The distance from the Haukedalsvatnet intersection point to Likhillaren is quite similar as that to Holsen. Was the earlier coffin resting point on a sacred threshold between the two lakes a principal symbolic consideration to linking the two eventual cemeteries? Part of future research to better answer these questions would logically include some explanation for the unusual symmetrical form of

the Holsen church, i.e. its apparent need to face both directions (even though the most used entrance is apparently to the west).

These glimpses into possible larger scale, formal, ritually effective, cognitive structures on the naturally dramatic landscape might have served to socially unify the area and especially service the passage to the other world at death. But understanding a much more detailed cultural mapping of farms and farm life, stretching well back into prehistory, may be even more important in fully appreciating landscape culture in the minds of emigrants to Minnesota. It is extremely fortunate, toward this end, that the architect Arne Berg left us his monumental volume of sketches of farm building layouts (*tuns*) and related landscapes as reproduced in figure 17. His technical expertise combined with ethnographic interviews of oldest living inhabitants. Most interesting in terms of the present study, is the overlap of the time period captured by Berg in Norway, the latter part of the 19th century, with the major settlement of Norwegians in Minnesota.

Berg (1968:167) draws the 1861 Holsen church in the upper left area of the farm landscape of figure 17. As in almost all farm landscapes of the emigration era, one would have found no true villages or administrative nodes, only farm clusters, whether composed of several farmsteads (*mangletun*) or a single one (*tun*), and parish churches often part of their own farm. While Norway also began its own “enclosure acts” in 1857, much later than England and even Southern Scandinavia, its effect on land holdings and spatial organization of the landscape was much less profound. In Skåne (southern Sweden) for example, before enclosure, farmers living in a clustered “village” (again only a group of individual farms) owned and kept track of production from their multitude slivers of cultivated land, even though functionally and socially they cooperated in much of the farm work and used grazing and woodland area in common. Enclosure in the 1700 and 1800’s reassembled (enclosed) property into farms where the individual family farm became one contiguous piece of land. This major change in Swedish and Danish farm society has been referred to as “blowing up the villages” since some members were forced to move out of the cluster, thus initiating territorial, bourgeois beliefs and the loss of collective practices (see Doxtater 1994: for a more extensive discussion).

In the farms of Norway, mostly on limited agricultural areas of the south, west, and north, Berg’s drawing taken from a *jordskiftekart* (enclosure map) of 1879 tells a different story. Instead of a major redistribution at the time of enclosure, the actual cognitive structure of the

land remained relatively stable. The basic dualism of the two original farms of Nigar'en ("lower farm") and Oppigar'en ("upper farm") can trace its location on each side of the Tungrova stream back to medieval times. Yet in the 17th and 18th centuries considerable division of these original farms occur:

Oppigarden (Upper Farm)	Oppigardstunet (original core) Bakketunet (hill tun) Øvstebakken (upper hill tun)
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Nerigarden (Lower Farm)	Utigarden (outer farm) Nigarden (lower farm) Midtunet (middle tun)
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Berg suggests that each of these six farm clusters at one time contained three to four land holders (not related to each other). In 1847 a landslide destroyed most of Oppigardstunet. Bakketunet, also shown in Figure 17, with only a single holder is the remainder of the original Oppigardstunet. Berg does not specifically map movement out of these village-like clusters at the time of enclosure, but he states that at Øvstebakken neither of the two holders moved out. It seems quite evident from the map and description of formal oppositions that cognitively this basic structure of farms still existed at the time of Berg's interviews. While the Skåne "villages" physically remained with their diminished numbers of farm families, and still associated with the adjacent medieval church, the overall map of farm life had changed dramatically with the addition of large singular territories of the farms that moved out—not to mention the radical change in practices of farming from collective to individual (all farms were enclosed not just the ones that moved their farm buildings out). In Berg's example in Norway, the typical division names of farms, all part of the original formalized map of the area, appear to be little altered by the enclosures. No new larger individual farms emerge to challenge the very old structure of the land.

In Minnesota, one of the most evident patterns in the map of 1200 plus rural immigrant cemeteries--as well as in Cather--is the dualism of many pairs along section lines, often the result of congregational splits for various reasons. Here in the Holsen parish at a similar time, one finds a split that created the Holsen-Haukedalen pair. The social and ritual relationships between

the two lake groups after the eastern cemetery was established in the 1600's are not known. Not unlikely, however, that many social relationships were maintained, perhaps symbolized in part by a surveyed geometric opposition between the two. The formal dualism at the level of cluster farms is clearly evident in the historical description provided by Berg.

Also requiring future research are possibilities that some opposed cluster farms might have been more spatially formalized. In the present case, as seen in figure 17, the original farm duality seems to lie quite formally on the Holsen church axis which intersects the focal point between the two clusters rather nicely at the bridge where the road crosses the stream. If this formal landscape pattern could be shown to be intentionally designed, it might also relate to the unusual duality of the Holsen church. From web photos of the site, one can clearly see a door on the east end as well. Is there an expressed, oppositional association not only between church and two adjacent original farm clusters, but to the larger scale community of Holsen-Haukedalen? The formal dualism of the land, expressed by both language and symbolic spatial pattern, appears to be extremely fundamental to cultural thinking among Norwegian farmers. Even after the landslide destroyed a good part of "Upper Farm" (Oppigarden), some survivors moved south forming a new dualistic pair, Ytre ("outer") and Indre ("inner") Skorpa (see lower left portion of map). Why wouldn't they have formed a territorial area of one name? Was it that these were in effect split farms, and needed to maintain a culturally traditional dualistic relation to some other farm or farm group?

A strong complement to Berg's perceptually and cognitively defining work is a body of related Norwegian farm ethnography also developed in the middle of the 20th century. It is probably true, however, that neither Berg nor his ethnographer colleagues believed that traditional farm life depended upon formalized symbolic conceptions of landscape (or architecture) fused to either folk practices or even Lutheranism. The author met with both Berg and perhaps the most prominent ethnographer, Rigmor Frimannslund, during dissertation research. Within the broadest sociological scope of collecting data on traditional Norwegian farm life, these ethnographers implicitly chart the roots of the Scandinavian ethic of equality. More recently a limited anthropological literature attempts to more specifically define this cultural genius as evident in most organizational scales; Daun (1991) as the best example perhaps, traces the ethos to particular needs of farmers to adapt in harsh climate and landscape. Yet visitors to Scandinavian folk museums still today seldom get a glimpse of the extremely

embedded, often spatially expressed beliefs of people that lived in these settings. This is aside from fact that these assemblages of farm buildings in cities could only with difficulty hope to interpret the larger landscape contexts in which specific buildings originally sat, even if this was interpretative goal. Most were assembled at the turn of the 19th century, when interpreted vernacular history focused originally almost exclusively on the practical use of artifacts and architecture.

In spite of the general absence of interest in linking expressive culture to traditional farm society, one needs to know the work of scholars such as Frimannslund. Her summary article on “farm community and neighborhood community” describes an extensively collaborative research effort that depended upon farmers and teachers, augmented by academics and a “trustworthy” representative of the old parish (1956:62). Questionnaires focused on the family, the residential community, and the working community, each of which represents a component of the overall socio-ecological structure of the farm landscape. Frimannslund writes that:

“the solidarity which existed in the old farm communities is quite inconceivable in our days. It was strongest in the mountain and fjord parishes in the southern, western and northern parts of the country.... Cottagers were often close relatives of the farmer and his family, and the permanent servants originated largely from other peasant families in the same parish. They were treated as members of the family on an equal footing with the farmer’s own adult off-spring, and often shared a room with them....They all sat at the same table and ate the same food.” (ibid:64)

While this pattern still prevailed in the larger farms of south-eastern regions and Trøndelag, social divisions between the farmer and farm hands were more marked. On all farms, the “master” (*husbond* or “house-farmer”) made decisions about work. The wife managed domestic work in the house and cow buildings. The most important status in Norwegian farm life was to be married, master of one’s own farm, a social reality not lost on immigrants homesteading in Minnesota. Frimannslund describes ceremony in which the father vacated the *höysetet* (see location in *stue* interior photo of figure 9) to symbolically express the taking over of the farm by the oldest son (1956:65). Yet frequently some form of division of the farm took place, maintaining optimal status for both father and son. As parents aged, their abilities were accommodated both in terms of dwelling and smaller garden plots.

At the next social and spatial scale beyond the nuclear family, the *grannelag* (“neighbor-group”) or *dugnad* (“workgroup”) participated with one another in both work and some

festivities. In most cases these groups consisted of families living within clusters of farm dwellings (Frimannslund 1956:70), with exception of the individual holder at Bakke shown in Figure 17. These exchanges might entail small work jobs or child care, but they also were the formal group that made the coffin, carried the corpse to the churchyard, and dug the grave. As a second example of how formalized folk religious beliefs linked to actual, spatially organized groups, Frimannslund (personal conversation) related one story about an event that took place after the *dugnad* helped the master of the farm build a new dwelling. They hung him in effigy from the ridge beam! The location of this ritual death in the dwelling most likely associated with symbolism of vertical transformation at the old center axis of the *stue*, even though a dwelling built in this later folk period would not have had a smoke vent or central hearth. Though the farm master might well think proudly of his new dwelling, the effigy rite communicates the ultimate power of the community, in the balance between individual agency and collective control.

In these more formal rites the *dugnad* overlap with the next larger social group, the *bedlag*, or “invited-group” (ibid:70), whose primary collective responsibilities are funerals and weddings. The *bedlag* was a ring of farms, with quite permanent boundaries. Again one is indebted to Berg’s sketching ability in Bø 1967:151, reproduced here as figure 18, to illustrate an actual mapping of *dugnad* and *bedlag* organization in the very traditional valley of Setesdal. In addition to understanding the different scale of work and ritual groups, one sees a functional equivalence between the *dugnad* group as nearest neighbors of single holder farmsteads, and where the work group is coincident with a cluster of farmsteads. Thus the difference between the village-like cluster (figure 17) and the individual farm (the farm in figure 9 is from the Setesdal area) has more to do with practicalities of farming in wetter, mountain and coastal climates compared to dryer inland valleys, more fully explained in Doxtater (1981:91-99). One of the major goals of ethnographers such as Frimannslund sought to prove cluster farms were in fact *not* “villages” at all, but part of a very continuous culture of farm organization conceptually between individual farms and larger collective landscape groups.

Beyond participating in weddings and funerals, as much more fully described as well in Doxtater (1981), the *bedlag* scale becomes *dugnad* as farmers come together for heavier work such as timber transport, reaping, roofing, erection of fences, roads and bridges, or house

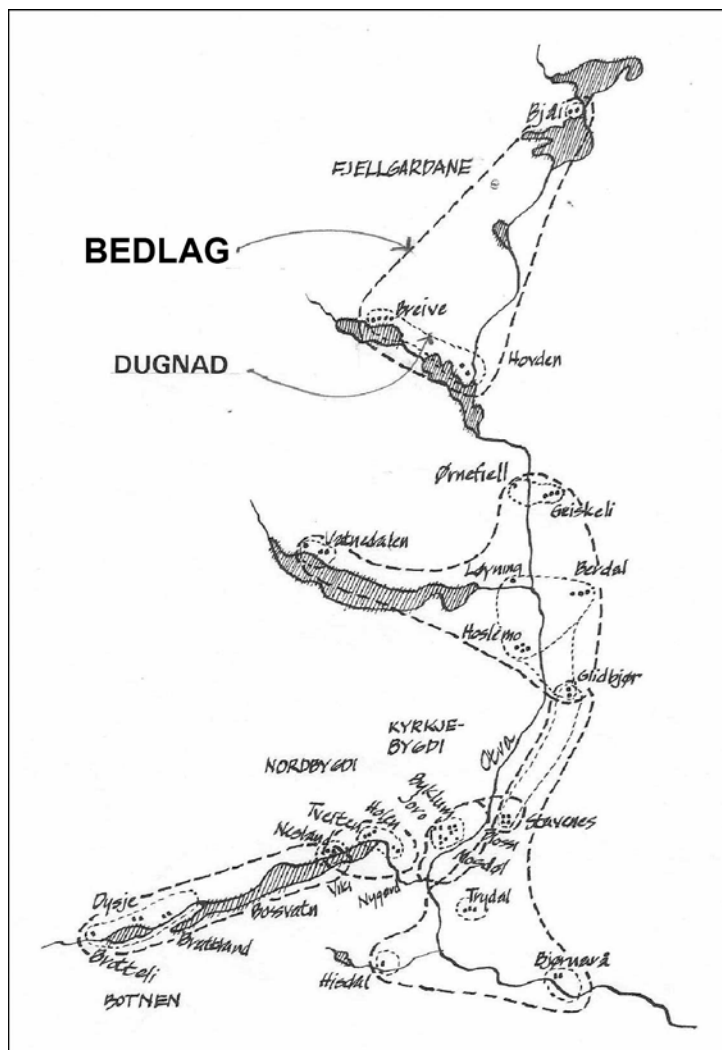


Figure 18. “*Bedlag*” or farms invited to rite of passage rituals (heavy dotted lines) and “*dugnad*” or farms doing cooperative work together (lite dotted lines) in traditional valley of Setesdal, Norway. From sketch by Arne Berg in Berg & Noss 1967.

building as mentioned. All of the work events at this scale were “always followed by festivities, with much good food and drink” (Frimannslund 1956:73), not unlike the formal “invited” events.

Frimannslund (1956) finishes her summary with a very detailed example of the daily practices of one cluster farm on the west coast. The detail of work and cooperative decision making, along with means of resolving disputes, and technical realities dealing with a mosaic of property pieces, provides an excellent snapshot of the kinds of experience many emigrants would have carried with them to the prairies of Minnesota. Strikingly apparent in these Norwegian accounts is an *absence* of influence of church entities in structuring the folk community and

landscape. From unpublished lectures of Frimannslund at the University of Oslo (1964-70), one finds multiple examples. Church tithes were never accessed; nor were there work obligations (ibid:69). To an extreme in this regard, it is even reported by informants that several priests were actually killed in isolated valleys like Setesdal (ibid:73).

The discourse of Lutheranism and Nationalism in 19th century Norway and America

Returning to the account of burying people in the larger scale Nebraska landscape, in folk Norway to rid oneself of evil, witchcraft, or sickness, an individual would place himself on a crossroads on Thursday evening, the old “center” day of the week (Christiansen’s *Litt om Torsdagen I Nordisk Folketro*, 1911:184). Sick animals, however, were taken to a crossroads during the day (Storaker 1932:92). Even soil from the crossroads had healing power. Along with other essences of “center” power like tar and fire, crossroads earth could be formed in a cross on the back of domestic animals as a cure (ibid:80). One can thus imagine the spirituality and practices at the bridge, a crossroads with the stream, between Lower and Upper farms at Holsen.

The problem with all of this, as the reader might well now imagine, is that a large number of these Norwegians emigrate to an American natural landscape largely absent of spiritual cultural meaning, structured only by the ubiquitous, legal, culturally neutral grid. Furthermore, it would be assumed from much of the literature about Norwegian-American culture, that the primary symbolic fuel to an essential, enculturating church organization of these pioneers, lay in their belief in evolving interpretations of Lutheran doctrine. Norwegians, of course, had been Christian for seven or eight hundred years prior to emigration, which included reading, or at least being read to, and believing in the Bible. How could these people believe in both a landscape filled with potential spiritual power, often involving contact with the “little people” (*hulderfolk*) at natural features or prehistoric graves for example, and a biblically described place as heaven above? Did beliefs in heaven as a different spiritual place from an ancestral landscape become more pronounced--and contentious as to how one gets there--in a new world landscape only spiritually meaningful to native Indians?

The use of the term “discursive” in the discussion that follows does not narrowly confine to the way variations of Lutheranism became combative from the pulpit and in the talk of congregations. Rather, it is useful to think of discursive forms of cultural expression, particularly

those born and bred via texts and the spoken word, as distinct from ritual practice in physical settings of landscape and architecture. In earlier writing, the distinction is made between “discursive” and “non-discursive” expression (Doxtater 1984, 1991). One hallmark of the discursive, in this sense lies in its ability to supersede the spatial limitations of ritual practice, recognizing the way the control of larger scale territories often relies upon some sort of usually text-based discourse and ultimately belief. Neither Catholicism nor Protestantism in Norway evolved from any indigenous, ritually structured landscape or religion. It came from afar, propagated by highly organized authorities with military, political and economic power. Its architecture was, for the most part, immediately expressive of this kind of discursive power though monumentality of façade and urban location, though vestiges of ancient “cross” ritual were maintained in church interiors.

Many of the anticlerical forms of Lutheranism, or “pietism”, preached on the Midwest prairies emerged in the early 19th century mostly from rural areas in Norway, particularly the west and south (Hale 1981). This religious discourse focuses on the ability of individuals and small groups to determine their own interpretation of the Bible, share in the governance of churches, and generally earn a place in heaven by practicing a good Christian life. Most prominent is the movement begun by Hans Nielsen Hauge. As a measure of the change in religious practice that these beliefs represented, at least from the state’s point of view, Hauge was arrested ten times and imprisoned for several years before 1814. It wasn’t until 1842 that the Norwegian parliament legitimized lay religious gatherings, already at the core of pietistic practice like that of Haugians--all of whom still considered themselves solidly Lutheran. Concomitantly in 1845, Norwegians were given the right to secede from membership in the state church for the first time in history (ibid:55).

At the time of emigration in the second half of the 19th century, most Norwegian farm folk, including cottagers and so-called “servants” who lived on larger farms almost as fictive kin, undoubtedly considered themselves to be good Christians. Yet this cultural identity propagated by well-meaning discursive process, appears to have been largely dissociated from a more ancient, land based, highly located, ritual culture with still powerful spiritual dimensions. The term “peasant” used by mid-century ethnographers suggests how isolated and traditional these people were, even though the appellation today seems misleading given the lack of contrasting urban populations at the time. The most important meaning to the “peasant” definition, however,

might ultimately focus on the way people used the discursive parish church and ritual landscape in *combination* to maintain, among other things, relations between the larger, more authoritarian scale of state and more egalitarian local farm groups. Perhaps the discursive component had long been largely subordinate, at least until religious revitalization of the Reformation. The move against the eventual strength of the state church in the early 19th century may represent as much a recognition of the imbalance between discursive and non-discursive practices—and the social distinctions that they embodied--than increased interest in discursive definitions of doctrine *per se*. Ultimately, beginning with the separation of church and state in the modern period after 1875, the majority of Norwegians today still belong to a Lutheran church but less than two percent attend services (religion<http://www.newsinenGLISH.no/2009>). At the time of major emigration in the last quarter of the 19th century, however, the number of anti-state church, pietistic farmers meeting in homes was quite small in relation to those still worshiping in parish structures.

This is also a time of revitalized Norwegian nationalist discourse, leaving the question whether these sentiments had a tendency to fuse with anticlerical, pietistic forms of Lutheranism. Given the overlap between the “local” in traditional landscape culture and pietistic discourse about the right way to interpret text based religion--usually in local rural dwellings rather than churches--could this be an evolution of a scaled down discursive component to folk society? Were new images of a national Norwegian “ethnicity” interwoven? Might this provide an alternative larger scale discursive entity to replace the state church in the social equation with the local landscape, i.e. a fusion of local Lutheran piety and “Norwegianness”. Would related ideas and discussions be especially attractive to those emigrating to both a new local landscape and new nation, though always maintaining the Lutheran core?

How useful is the idea of a “non-discursive” cultural pole to research on Norwegian immigration which tends to highlight the “discursive”? As a case in point, and turning now to the American scene, one can look at Hempel’s (2011) recent dissertation. An extremely well researched product of a Norwegian department of social history and religion, her work thoroughly reviews the spectrum of literature. Hempel follows Bourdieu using his tools of “social capital” brought to play as individual members of social groups encounter actual situations or historical change as “praxis”—with no particular distinction between text based and ritually based manifestations of social capital. Since the role of the Lutheran church is seen by

most researchers as perhaps *the* key to adaptation of immigrants to America, Hempel's primary source for social capital comes from discussions recorded in lay church meetings in six congregations in Minnesota. The primary discontent in these situations is discursive competition among three theologically distinct but still solidly Lutheran synods carefully traced back to 18th century Norway; these develop more expressly in the religious freedom of the new country. The "high church" or Norse Synod (Ns) largely continues the state church in Norway, compared most distinctly with the "low church" of the Hauge pietists (Hs), and then a kind of middle synod called the *Konferensen* (Kf) fused aspects of Norwegian and Danish Lutheranism.

In concert with the large body of academic work that precedes her, dissertation conclusions refine earlier ideas about "push" – "pull" effects expressed primarily through written and image media exchanges among emigrants and immigrants, of processes of becoming "American" also working at large national scales and involving an "unsettled" and "settled" transformation with all its social and political realities. Perhaps Hempel's most theoretical contribution defines change from an early period where immigrants sought to reestablish a Norwegian culture in the new land, and a later one where American adaptation became more often the goal.

In spite of Hempel's close attention to the early reestablishment stage, and even her strategy to compare three rural and three urban (Minneapolis) congregations, one finds nevertheless almost no mapping of any early, local ritual or ritual-like religious use of the landscape. In her defense, however, academic studies of history and religion seldom include non-discursive practices, particularly as landscape ritual (more often found in the records of social anthropologists studying exotic, preliterate societies). In Hempel's work one can ask whether some as yet undefined "ritual" component of her early reestablishment phase might not alter her ultimate thinking about phases of immigration, or at least how *praxis* came into being and more importantly eventually changed. Hempel certainly commits to good, even spatially contextual information about the activities and places of local congregational life beyond the recorded discourse of meeting minutes. Much of her ultimate evaluation of the meaning of these records comes from understanding politics on the ground, as it were, between pastors and parishioners and among feuding factions of congregations. Even in the later period of adaptation to America, where the conflicts become most exacerbated, in the late 1880's, actual religious differences in belief about such things as the teaching of predestination is often less important to

outcome than other more purely social issues. And while some of these actions might involve where to locate a cemetery for example, no relationship to any possible formal, cognitive cultural landscape is considered.

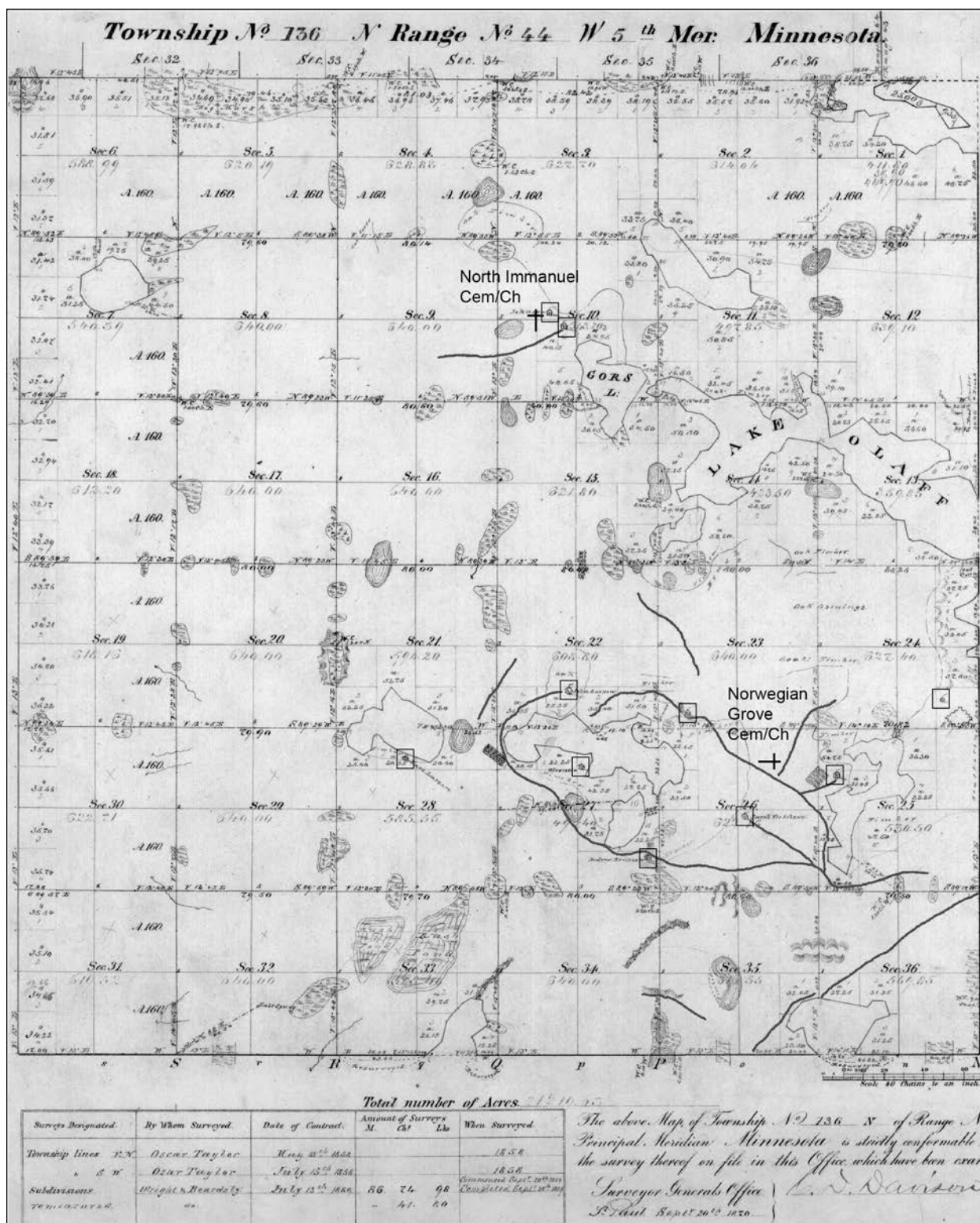
Hempel describes the later period first in her dissertation since it contains the greatest conflicts. In the late 1880's at the Norse Synod church of North Immanuel in Ottertail County, Minnesota, occurred one of the most serious congregational splits on record. The question was whether the pastor would serve additional Norwegian Americans who were turning to additional variations of synods at the time (beyond the original three) (2011:120). Strife became so intense that ultimately the pastor became associated with the *minority* of the congregation, a reality made all the more possible by the well-established political and economic control of church property and rector salaries by lay councils. The long tenured pastor at North Immanuel had children buried in the churchyard, and along with other minority faction relatives of deceased loved ones became sensitive to the prospect of having to move graves to a different place in the landscape if the congregation didn't remain whole. At one flash point headstones were torn down, and even rock throwing occurred at a picnic event of the church. Eventually the church divided, creating a new cemetery and church just around the section corner about three-quarters of a mile away; its name is West North Immanuel (the church no longer stands).

One question Hempel might have asked is why, given the extreme animosity of the two recently split congregations, did they locate the new church so close to the original? Even if there logically wouldn't have been any territorial definition of the two groups in the larger farmscape by which position a more distant second church, why would they have decided to locate in virtually the *same* place? The most obvious reason is that the new church actually represents the original synod and congregation associated with a section cross point, and they wished to maintain this more discursive (territorial?) history. Was there, however, something meaningful about this location in some larger, non-discursive context? Hempel's well informed, and subsequent or even secondary, discussion about the early period of the three different synod congregations in Ottertail provides a clue. She details the importance of early congregations first establishing a cemetery, often several years before having a permanent pastor or resources to build a church (2011:152). The right to be buried in a cemetery was a very important "good", often followed by issues in the placing and division of graves within the sacred ground, and even exclusion or necessity to buy one's resting place. Hempel describes the Frimannslund's *dugnad*

organization as necessary to the basic maintenance and beautification of the churchyard, especially concerning the fences (as thresholds). The question arises, however, as to whether the social scale of early congregations was in practice more *bedlag* (group invited to ritual) than *dugnad* (neighbor work group).

The only mention of the initial process of locating the cemetery comes from records of early Sverdrup, a *Konferensen* (Kf) congregation founded in 1876 about thirty miles southeast of North Immanuel (2011:191). Apparently somewhat the exception in this less factional early period, the lay committee couldn't agree on a location for the cemetery and eventual church; as a result, thirteen families left the fledgling congregation. Hemple does not mention any church records describing the locations of the competing sites. We do not know if this conflict involved a more political, territorial, or "discursive" play among church members who favored land given or sold by one farmer as opposed to another; or whether the location involved the design of some larger spatial context perhaps not unlike that of the two Norwegian churches on the west-east section line in Nebraska. This begs the question for the moment of how one considers obvious (discursive) conversations as individuals meet to make decisions about the layout of a possible symbolic and ritually inspired framework in the landscape, either in the new world or for that matter when making changes in landscape structure as seen in the Holsen-Haukedal example.

Looking specifically at the landscape in figure 19 where two of three rural congregations of Hempel's study were first organized, it didn't matter to her that the third, Sverdrup was unlikely part of the same immigrant map given its distance apart. But from the surveyor's drawing nothing suggests any cultural structure on the land, only a "wild" place untamed by roads or cultivation along section lines. The outside boundaries of the present day "Norwegian Grove Township" were surveyed in 1858. The surveying of the 36 interior sections of the township is recorded in the plat map of 1870-72 shown as figure 19. Some of these earliest plat maps of township interiors only show section lines and prominent landscape features like wooded areas and lakes. This Ottertail surveyor included cart tracks or wagon roads and the locations of named farmsteads, many of which might have been there for ten years or more, given the 1862 date of the Homestead Act. As expected, no roads are drawn on section lines at this early date, but what the surveyor also does not show, interestingly enough, is the location of churches of the two congregations, North Immanuel (Ns) and Norwegian Grove (Hs) being organized in the same time frame as the plat map dates (locations added in the illustration by the



author). The church structures of course, being funded and built some years after the formation of congregations didn't exist at the time of the 1870-72 survey work. It is difficult to establish precisely when the first person was buried in either of the two churchyards in question, but it may be that the earliest congregation, 1870 Norwegian Grove might even have been located prior to completion of the survey that filled in the township, as distinct from the location of North Immanuel at the end of the survey work in 1872. North Immanuel, unlike Norwegian Grove, is located close to a section intersection, or "cross", though low topography and a pond (still existing today) very close to the survey intersection point, may have caused the cemetery to be positioned on high ground about 300 yards to the east.

At the expanded larger scale combined plat maps of the same period, figure 20, North Immanuel's location is not only by a section cross point, but that point lies on a north-south meridian running through the centers of three townships: Norwegian Grove, Trondhjem, and Oscar. Again these interior township lines are being laid out contemporaneously with formation of the two congregations and probably location of their cemeteries. Furthermore, as Hempel mentions, townships become politically organized just *after* the survey as in the case of Norwegian Grove in 1872 where all the signing charter members were Norwegian (2011:155). The townships of Trondhjem and Oscar, named for the Swedish king, were chartered in 1873. Yet again, no section roads connect these three township centers, still unmarked by very modest town halls built on some, decades later. No cultural artifacts defined them, save for a typical survey stake not unlike all the others at section intersection points.

While Hempel discusses Norwegian Grove township formation in relation to the Haugian congregation of same name, she does not map relationships of her focus congregations to any larger multi-township scale. The most obvious omission in this regard, mostly perhaps because of the greater focus on the later more discursively prominent period, is the fact that the original North Immanuel cemetery and eventual church align with two other churches on a multiple township center meridian. She does report that the very early division that created the North and South Immanuel congregations, both still Norse Synod, took place amicably in comparison to the later problems that created West North Immanuel. Curiously enough, Hempel also describes working church association among not only the two Immanuels in 1872, but a third congregation, Hedemarken (2011:169), farther to the south that formed about the time of the original Immanuel in 1871. The same pastor served all three congregations. Hempel, however, does not map its

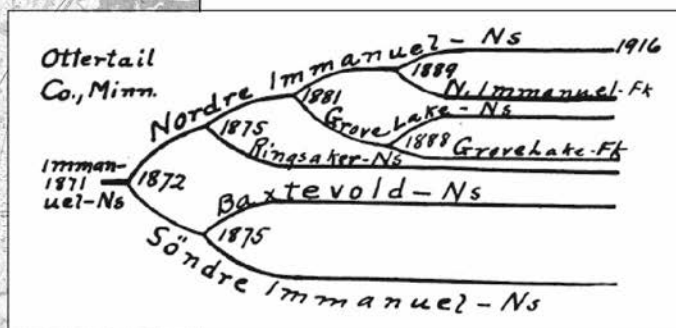
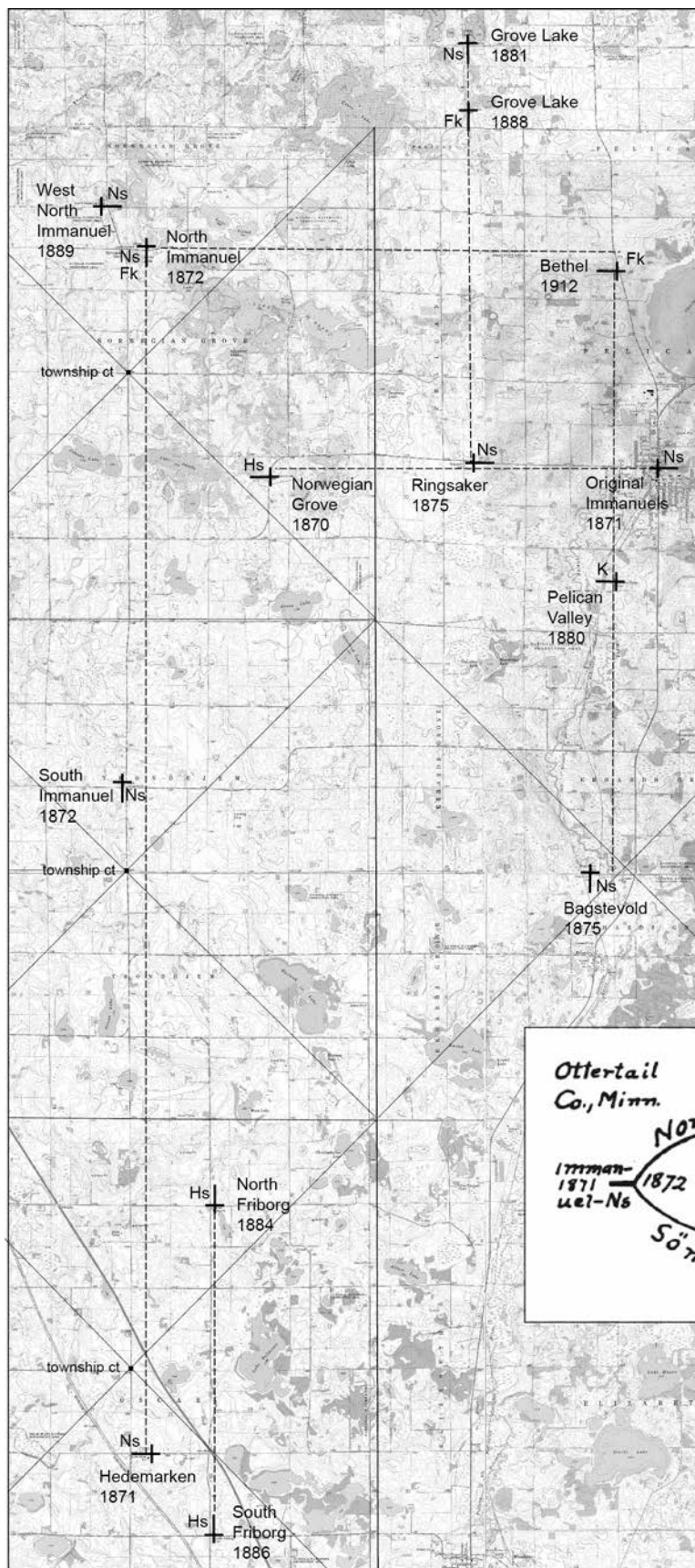


Figure 20. Meridian alignment of Norwegian Synod churches on center lines of three townships (Immanuels and Hedemarken) plus other formal patterns; Norlie's 1918 diagram of the evolution of Immanuel churches.

location also on the meridian of township centers in figure 20. All three Ns churchyards are close to the line either west or east, yet consistently off about one mile north or south of the township centers. The distance from North Immanuel, north of the center, to Hedemarken, south of its center, is about 15 miles, about twice the Nebraska example, but here with a third Norwegian church involved.



North Immanuel (org. 1872)



South Immanuel (org. 1872)

Figure 21. Standing North and South Immanuel churches on township center line meridian; both face south (photos by author).

One can be relatively certain from the common origin and “North” and “South” names of the 1872 Immanuel pair that their position on the township center north-south meridian was intentional or designed. Additionally, the orientations of the naves of these churches both run north-south, additionally expressing their meridian relationship, see figure 21. The construction and orientation of Hedemark’s church might well have preceded the Immanuel buildings, perhaps explaining its east-west orientation. After all, this congregation and presumably its

cemetery location was established prior to the first Immanuel division, and thus could have founded the meridian right at the time when the interiors of townships were being surveyed.

Figure 20 also includes possible designed alignments of later Norwegian churches. One suspects an original east-west expression in 1870-71 of an opposition between “low” Haugian church, Norwegian Grove, and the original “high” Norse Synod congregation which formed in the area of the present day town of Pelican Rapids; it is this congregation that formed North and South Immanuel in 1872. The two original Hs and Ns congregations were only about four miles apart and again might have preceded township survey and charter. The close association, in earliest times of both state and pietistic churches is immediately interesting in the way it rises above the discourse of competing synods. Did these congregations know each other and participate socially and even quasi-ritually in the landscape on occasion? Or was their alignment a more purely discursive, territorial message of Norwegian ethnicity, perhaps primarily to competitive Native Americans and other Europeans?

Included as an inset in figure 20 is O.M. Norlie’s diagram of divisions that emanated from the original Immanuel congregation in Ottertail County. Published in 1918 in Norwegian, pastor Olaf Norlie organized a comprehensive survey of Norwegian-American Lutheran congregations in the United States that listed founding dates, locations, names of pastors and church committee members, costs of churches, and importantly synod membership. For anyone mapping an immigrant landscape like Minnesota, this multi-volume work provides an essential resource, particularly to those pursuing more discursive research. It takes over four hundred pages to list the Minnesota congregations complete with occasional pictures of churches; Norlie and his collaborators admit that some might have been missed.

Norlie’s diagrams of congregation evolution are immediately interesting for their documentation of *some* spatial relationships of congregations in the landscape; other relationships in these diagrams, however, represent no new cemetery/church location but a change in synod membership. In the description of congregations, where a split occurs, a reason is usually but not always provided. For the original Immanuel Norse Synod in 1871, it divides because of a “*lang kirkevei*” (long way to church) (Norlie 1918:599). No reason is given for the Ringsaker split from North Immanuel in 1875 (both Ns) or the Bagstevold split from South Immanuel in 1875 (both Ns). Presumably here too the issue is distance to church for an expanding population dependent upon horse and buggy. Similarly, the 1881 division of Grove

Lake from North Immanuel appears to be for the same reason, though Norlie does not comment in this regard. This new site locates quite accurately due north of 1875 Ns Ringsaker, though not on the section line; the locations created by the two amicable splits of Ringsaker and Grove Lake may have been designed as another north-south Norse Synod construct parallel in the landscape and centered on the mother church of North Immanuel to the west—all four churches, including South Immanuel have the same pastor in 1881. In 1888 Grove Lake itself divides into two church sites, but still on the Ringsaker-Grove Lake line about a mile apart. Nordlie lists doctrinal differences of *naadvalgstriden* (predestination) for this split, the same problem recorded as creating West North Immanuel in 1889. Hempel provides a much more detailed description of this conflict that related as much to differences between pastor and congregation (this cause is also listed at times by Norlie to explain divisions).

If the daughter churches of Ringsaker and Grove Lake might have been located to formally relate to the mother, North Immanuel, what of Bagstevold? While it had no Ns partner to the south, it was positioned on the township center line a mile south of South Immanuel, and very close to the center of the adjacent Erhard's Grove Township. Again, Trondhjem township interiors were surveyed about the time the Immanuel – Hedemarken meridian threesome was created; but the township charter, probably signed again by all Norwegians, came into being about two years before the Bagstevold congregation formed. Erhard Grove Township was organized earlier in 1870. Together these might have been reasons for its location on the Trondhjem center line. In any event, South Immanuel undoubtedly closely associated with the organized township, meaning which could have transferred to Bagstevold. While this was a mother-daughter relationship, at the time of the division in 1875 the churches had different pastors. The later churches of Pelican Valley and Bethel, neither of which are Ns seem to form a latter day meridian parallel to the North Immanuel-South Immanuel construct in spite of their three different synods. This line too connects township centers. On a east-west axis, Bethel pairs up with the newer synod at North Immanuel, both are "*Frikirken*" (Ff) (they don't have the same pastor in 1912).

Finally in the abstract geometry of church location of figure 20, one finds an 1884-1886 pair once again on a meridian with "North" and "South" nomenclature. The two Friborg churches are both Hauges Synod; Norlie (613) neither draws a diagram nor seemingly considers these a division on doctrinal grounds, rather an apparent dualistic pair like the Immanuels

organized for travel considerations (four miles apart with the same pastor in 1886). In the mid 1880's section roads may be beginning to be built, though dates for such are extremely difficult to determine because of lack of old township records. Both church structures at the two Friborg cemeteries are gone, and the orientations of the buildings are difficult to determine from visiting the sites; logically they would both be north-south like the Immanuels. The location of this smaller Ottertail meridian, however, seems to reflect an east-west dualistic relationship between Norse and Hauges Synods that originally stood for a short time between 1870 Norwegian Grove (Hs) and 1871 Immanuel (Ns). Given the replacement of the Norse Synod presence as North Immanuel-South Immanuel, together with the stability of the early, single Hauges church at Norwegian Grove, is it just coincidence that the next expression of the "low" church in the area not only mimicked the Immanuel-Hedemarken meridian but located this line quite accurately at an east-west midpoint with Norwegian Grove (though projected south to an area of population growth)?

Return to the question about the rationale behind West North Immanuel's location. Again, in spite of extreme animosity, the churchyard was positioned adjacent to the same section intersection point, just a couple hundred yards from North Immanuel. Furthermore, from visiting the West North Immanuel cemetery, it seems likely that the building which no longer stands probably oriented east (to the cross point or to North Immanuel) . Was this a simple recognition of unquestionable social ties between some members of the recently divided congregations? For travel reasons it wouldn't be necessary to be this close to each other.

Considering the larger, possibly formally understood, landscape patterns in this Ottertail area, the West North Immanuel location can be recognized as extremely logical. Again, it is the *old* Norse Synod congregation that moves to the *new* site, leaving the original North Immanuel church building and cemetery to become *Forenede* (Fk) (eventually along with Bethel to the east). The mental map these Norwegians had of the Norse Synod landscape before the split might well have understood the North Immanuel cross point as the intersection of two axes: the original north-south meridian down through South Immanuel and Hedemarken, and an axis east to the balanced locations of the Ringsaker – Grove Lake smaller meridian. The division at this "pivotal" Norse Synod point created a new church but still within this original synod construct; thus it had to be located at the cross to maintain the spatial landscape relationship to the other synod sites. The apparent eastern orientation of the West North Immanuel entrance might have

also been symbolically logical. Its location clearly connected to the early Ns meridian, but at the time of the split no site existed due east, rather the spatially balanced Ringsaker-Grove Lake pair. An east entrance orientation might have strengthened the association of the new smaller West North Immanuel with the more proximate eastern pair, again of the same synod.

Certainly some pieces of the geometrically formal Ottertail patterns of figure 20 appear to have been intentionally designed given the coincidence of timing with the survey of township interiors and the creation of their centers (though prior to township organization), church nomenclature of “North” & “South”, probable social relationships or even ritual exchange between divided congregations and sharing of pastors among component patterns. More difficult to determine, however, is the primary motivation for doing so. Is this a more intuitive traditional feeling for remnants of ritual landscapes in Norway, or a more conscious attempt to present a persuasive, territorial new discourse in a foreign land? And how might a more thorough mapping of the Norwegian immigrant landscape enter into academic research? Hempel’s novel detailing of *habitus* in the North Immanuel case certainly takes a step in the right direction. What one sees in the larger spatial pattern, however, is less the rare nasty social conflict, however well documented, than an integration of peacefully divided congregations, and more importantly perhaps, inclusion of groups from all synods. This integration does not restrict to the early periods where Norwegians attempt to reproduce their own culture in the new world. Even in the later 1880’s and 90’s, one finds a coherent evolution of pattern, as seen in Hemple’s focus on West North Immanuel, whose location paradoxically seems to link to a larger, formalized cultural landscape.

It may well be that cultural research, particularly in literate, immigrant societies focuses too exclusively on “discursive” expression, working from an assumption that for the most part formal ritual or ritual-like patterns of social space only occur inside churches or are otherwise limited to architectural scales of churchyard, farmstead and dwellings (though analysis is lacking here). Understanding these meanings at the landscape scale could expand Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus* which includes ritual formalities of architectural space, i.e. the Berber house (1973), but omits possibilities of such processes in landscape. One of the key problems in this regard, as Hemple’s work demonstrates, is that these non-discursive meanings tend not to be talked about or recorded in text sources, in spite of the apparent fact they are consciously designed by community groups, at least in the present context of immigration.

MINNESOTA RIVER

“Yellow Medicine” is both a Sioux “yellow root that they dig” (Pajutazee), and interestingly enough one of the most prominent Norwegian-American congregations founded early in the vicinity of the confluence of Yellow Medicine and Minnesota Rivers (the present day county on the south side of the river is Yellow Medicine and that on the north Renville). In 1851 the treaty at Traverse des Sioux with the Wahpeton and Sisseton bands gave huge swaths of agricultural land to the U.S. in exchange for Indian relocation to a radically smaller reservation 10 miles wide on each side of Minnesota River; this area already included the established wagon road from Fort Ridgely in the southeast to the South Dakota border south of Fort Abercrombie.

Both the source of “yellow medicine” and the river itself were likely reasons for locating the reservation for the two bands of Sioux. Yet these Native Americans lived on the eastern edge of an immense prairie landscape defined by “cosmic” concepts of time and space. Rice-Rollins (2004) describes how the Sioux, though nomadic, nevertheless understood a most sacred center in its geographical domain at the Black Hills, particularly involving the Devil’s Tower, over 400 miles but directly west of the Sioux Agency sites in figure 22. Related to this large scale cultural map were more transportable concepts of direction, seven in all: North, South, East, West, Up, Down, and Center. Not atypically in such preliterate cultures, directional symbolism related to a largest scale symbolic map empowered many “peripheral” landscape places and practiced ritual. The act of smoking the sacred pipe, for example, was a frequent if not essential component to ceremony at many settings; the pipe itself and the transformation of the tobacco to smoke was iconic of the power of center axis in the directional scheme (Black Elk 1932). The red stone quarry from which many of the pipes were made (Tennant 2009:1079) may have been one of the most sacred Sioux landscape features of the eastern part of their domain. Today it exists as Pipestone National Monument located about 65 miles southeast of the Sioux Agency sites along the Minnesota River.

In the study of Norwegian immigrants, the cosmic basis of preliterate (non-discursive) Sioux religion seems a strange footnote to the clash of cultures that took place broadly across the American West. Aside from the obvious differences in landscape ecology, the one hunting and gathering, the other intensively agricultural, one culture derived its religion from landscape symbolism and ritual, and the other based their beliefs on discourse about Christian texts and often related law. Over 600 of these immigrants, mostly farmers, were killed in the Sioux War

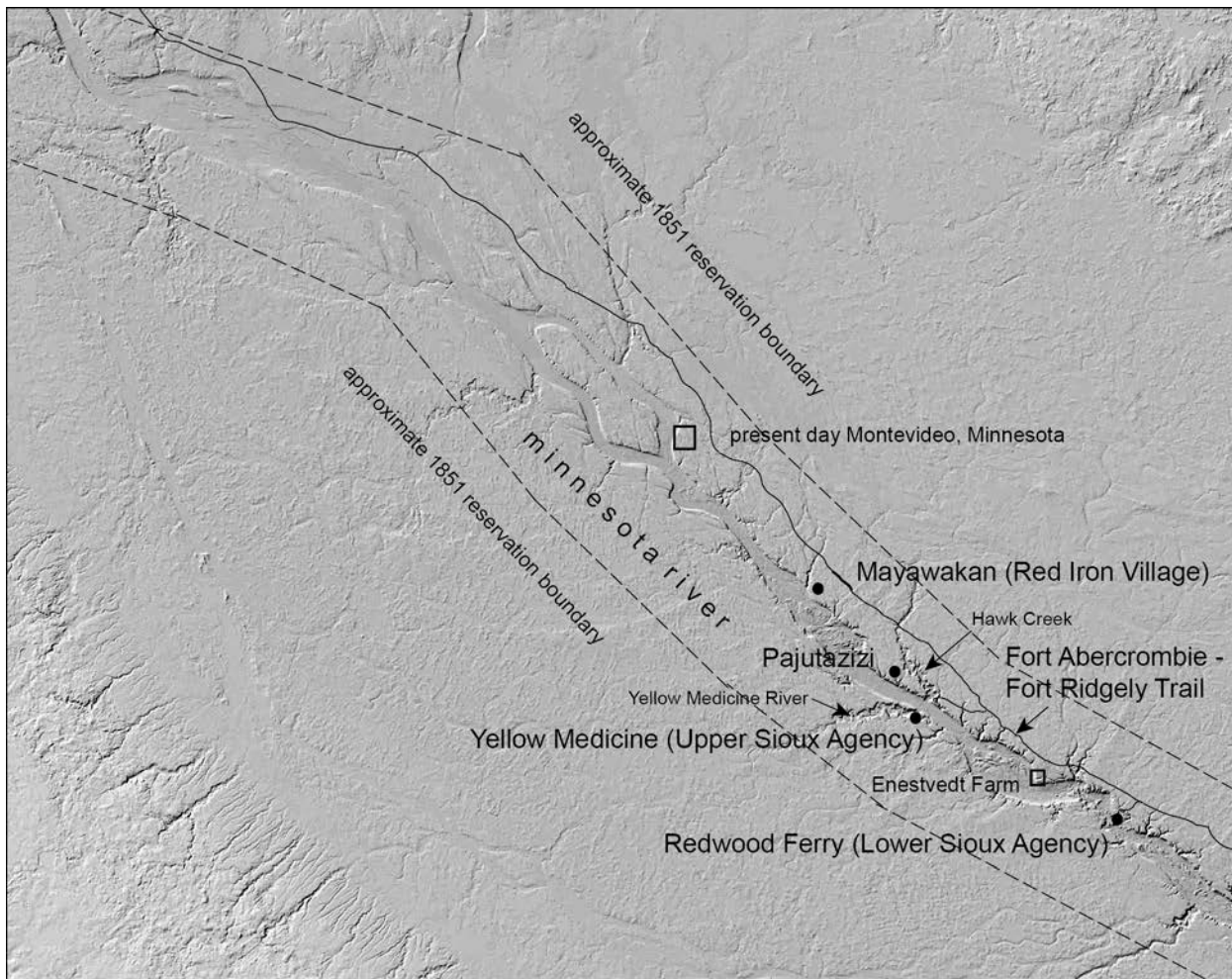


Figure 22. Minnesota River area where Sioux War of 1862 began: reservation boundaries, native villages, U.S. Indian Agencies, and trail from Fort Ridgely to Fort Abercrombie.

from 1862-64. The spark that ignited the bloodshed took place in the vicinity of the Upper and Lower Sioux Agencies shown in Figure 22. During the hostilities, 1700 Sioux women, children and elders were forcibly marched 150 miles from Lower Sioux Agency to Fort Snelling near St. Paul; after the conflict was put down by the U.S. Military several dozen Indians were hanged in Mankato.

The difference between a ritually based preliterate culture and one moved by other “media” operating without reference to any sacred landscape is implicit in Carlson and Gareth’s (2015) critique of the way the war is today memorialized. Near Hutchinson where Chief Little Crow was killed, or Mankato where the insurgents were hanged, or at Fort Snelling where remnants of the bands were imprisoned, displays of text on stone and concrete monuments interpret a mixed discourse on the uprising. All of these settings contribute to the present legal or territorial definitions of contemporary culture in the U.S.. Most interesting to Carlson and Gareth is the way native Sioux, who have only in the last few decades reestablished a small Upper and Lower Sioux reservation at the original Minnesota River location, have begun to cognize the war in a manner more resonant with their indigenous culture. In 2002 they recreated an annual march from the river to Fort Snelling. At each of the 150 miles a sizable group of Sioux participants leave a wooden stake inscribed with the Dakota names of ancestors known to have been on the forced march. Eventually these modest markers (not that unlike original grid survey markers) decay and disappear, ideally leaving an abstract mental map of the reenacted route. It is clear to these authors that this landscape structured practice operates as a fundamentally different cultural process. One of the authors quoted by Carlson and Gareth (*ibid*:292), begins by saying: “In dominant white culture, place is objectified through maps and representations. Land is property and spectacle”. Was the early survey grid for some immigrants, however, an opportunity for discursive, territorial “objectification” as European culture—though maps did exist in a few offices—rather than for something like the ritual mapping of Native American landscape?

In spite of the strong landscape component in Norwegian emigrant culture, it is of course doubtful that they understood any commonality with the Sioux in this regard. The print depiction of Native Americans to European settlers came from sources in major cities or even abroad, often cast in competitive, pejorative terms. Returning settlers would have been able to tell the wave of newcomers of friends or relatives from the area that had been killed. Actual contact between

Norwegians and Sioux still living along the Minnesota River just after the war in 1862 could also have heightened fearful views of Indian life. The Yellow Medicine landscape was not chosen for present research as a focus due to its Sioux War history, but because of the extent of formal patterns not unlike, but more extensive and complex, than those suggested in the Ottertail sketch. Yet once chosen, one recognizes that the Sioux War could have had some effect in the creation of a new Norwegian landscape, and some records exist of actual Norwegian-Indian experiences in the late 1860's and early 1870's.

The Enestvedt farm located on figure 22 has a historical site marker describing the original "dugout" (first partial earth shelter) and then log house of Ole and Anne who homesteaded here in 1867. One of the best descriptions of contact with Indians in the area can be found in an unpublished paper by descendent Richard Enestvedt (n.d.). He explains that most of the hostile Indians had been loaded on steamboats and transported down the Mississippi and up the Missouri to new reservations just after the war, but a few "staggered" back to their old homes. There was continuous visiting among Indians in several camps in the area.

"Mr. Ole Enestvedt described how they used to come walking in bands of 20 or 30. Men in the lead usually carrying rifles and lounging along, sitting down on a knoll to view the countryside and wait for the squaws and children to catch up. The squaws carried huge packs of household goods, food, clothes and papooses on their backs. Usually, they had a pony, or two, or a couple of large dogs fitted out with a travois to carry baggage. Many a settler's family was sorely frightened by these bands, who would come unannounced into the settlers homes to beg for food and other articles. Later, these Indians received some form of government subsistence; and their mode of travel changed as they could afford it; to horse-drawn wagons and platform buggies. In late years, they were to be seen in Model T's and other autos traveling along the points along the Sioux Trail." (page 2)

Richard Enestvedt's retelling focuses on a Norwegian family, the Rudi's, close neighbors along the river in this early period. One winter the adult Rudi son was caught out in a storm while traveling to the settlement near Redwood Falls (Lower Sioux Agency) and froze his feet to the point that he couldn't walk, ending up lying unconscious in the snow all night. The next morning Indians found and took him to the settlement, but died a few days later (page 5). The Rudi son's mother, Turi, is not long after widowed and continues to maintain the farm for many years. Early in her widowhood, however, her closest neighbor was a sizeable band of Indians who camped on the hillside just above her home (the Enestvedts only lived a mile north, but on the opposite side of the river).

“These Indians made a nuisance of themselves by begging for food and other articles. Out of fear and also neighborliness, Turi sometimes complied with their requests, although she knew that many of the things would never be returned or paid for. One day the Indians decided to invite Turi and her family for an outdoor feast. Turi was reluctant to accept the invitation; but finally went accompanied by the children. A campfire was burning in one part of the camp. A large kettle and several smaller ones containing something that was boiling, hung over the campfire. Turi whiled away the time talking with the Indians and inspecting articles of clothing and other things around the camp. The children were running around the camp, and playing with the Indian youngsters, and also looking at things that interested them. Suddenly Turi felt a tug on her skirt, and two of the little boys were shouting excitedly in Norwegian, ‘Mother! Mother! They are boiling a large dog in the kettle, and they haven’t even removed the hair and skin.’ Turi’s appetite for dinner dwindled; but she hurriedly assured the boys there would be other things to eat and that all would be well. It turned out that way as there were also prairie chickens and fish served, whereby the family managed to make out quite a passable meal” (pg. 6-7)

The hillside where Turi’s Indian neighbors camped later becomes the site for one of the early Norwegian cemeteries and eventual churches. Turi Rudi’s homestead and generous log cabin just below for many years served as a congregation meeting place until the church was built. One might make less of the cultural abhorrence of eating dog in view of the fact that when coming down the Columbia River Lewis & Clark’s company preferred dog purchased from the Indians to salmon. More to the point, however, one glimpses a limited but important social *integration* between Indians and Norwegians, in this story based on a sharing of smaller scale landscape space, not dissimilar to the *grannelag* in the old country. There might have been a much larger scale meaning--though one more exclusively integrating Norwegians--associated with this early location where things called “Yellow Medicine” connect with the Minnesota River. The pastor that helped organize the local congregation in Turi’s house in 1872 also, along with one other, traveled a circuit of great distances.

An eastern meridian: Palmyra – Fort Ridgely

A little less than thirty miles downriver from Turi Rudi’s homestead and the Sioux Agencies one finds another pair of standing Norwegian-American churches within stone’s throw of each other. Most of the Minnesota River settlers upstream passed through this area to the east. Turi’s husband Tov was a founding member of the earliest of these congregations. The Fort Ridgely and Dale church and cemetery sits on the west side of the present day section road while its

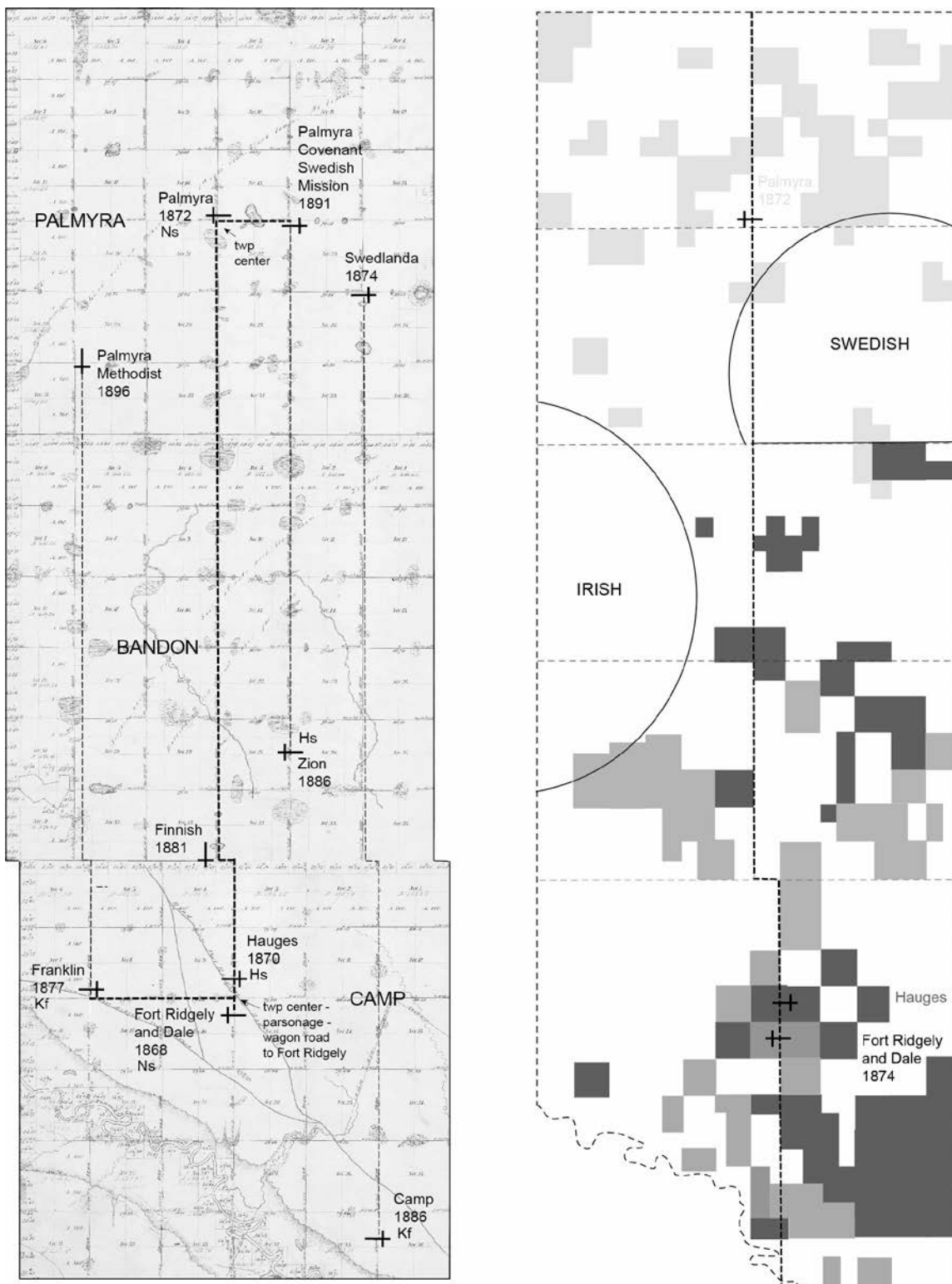


Figure 23. Meridian alignments of churches in three Minnesota townships studied by Gjerde 1979 (left), with background maps of first subdivision surveys and “wild” roads; dispersed location of farms that belonged to three Norwegian congregations in 1888 (1979:410): Ns Palmyra (lightest shade), Hs Hauges (intermediate shade), and Ns Fort Ridgely & Dale (darkest shade); adjacent areas of Irish and Swedes.

spatial partner Central and Hauges (today's single congregation) lies on the east side a half a mile to the north. Palmyra, for its part on this meridian sits about eleven miles much farther north, as seen in figure 23. All three congregations formed early from 1868-74 as indicated on the map; churches came later. Fort Ridgely & Dale and Palmyra were originally "high" or Norwegian Synod churches, while Hauges and its eventual affiliates preached the "low" pietistic doctrine. With the Immanuel Ottertail landscape fresh in mind, the reader recognizes the use of a meridian connecting township centers to locate these three Norwegian cemeteries, either right at a township cross point or at a section cross also on the meridian. Both the township frames and subdivisions were surveyed earlier here (1857-58) than in the Ottertail example, raising the question whether straight section roads preceded the placement of cemeteries. The actual organization of township committees, however, occurred much closer to the time when congregations formed, i.e. Palmyra 1874, Bandon 1871, and Camp 1867, suggesting that when the cemeteries were located no section roads, town halls, or any other artifact save from surveyor's marks, defined the eleven mile line across the rolling prairie. This issue will continue to be revisited at other times and places in the Minnesota River focus area.

This three township area of figure 23 exactly coincides with that studied by one of the most cited social researchers on Norwegian-American emigration and immigration, Jon Gjerde (1979). Gjerde, raised in a Norwegian-American community in Iowa, looked in detail at socio-economic data from specific emigration districts in Norway, then making comparisons to places where they settled, mostly in Wisconsin and Minnesota. He sought to dispel revisions of long held ideas that rural ethnic communities, such as the Norwegians, were stronger and more successful than Americans living under similar conditions.

Gjerde (1986) later focuses expressly on a doctrinal fission in a congregation about fifty miles north of the Yellow Medicine area. Having plotted the homesteads of immigrants in two townships lying east-west of each other, he sought possible territorial reasons behind the congregation's discord over predestination, i.e. whether one goes to heaven primarily based on God's grace or whether one can earn entry by living a good Christian life. The division created a pair of east-west churches not unlike the Nebraska example, though for doctrinal reasons. Gjerde found that some territorial clustering may have occurred in the area where the new church was located after the mid 1880's split, though early on in the late 1860's and early 1870's farms were relatively dispersed in the landscape, without strong clustering around the original congregation

site. This suggests that earlier settlers tend not to use territoriality to define individual churches, unlike discursive processes perhaps more common in other immigrant ethnicities or pervasively in historical and contemporary America.

Returning to Gjerde's (1979) research of the three townships of figure 23, the census date for his study is 1888, about twenty years later than the organization of the first cemeteries and churches in the area. His 1986 piece sought to focus on territoriality associated with doctrinal divisions *within* Norwegian congregations. And while the work on the three townships uses primarily non-spatial economic and social measures to define success or failure of community, he provides a view of territoriality *between* communities of different ethnicities—even though not Gjerde's primary goal of comparing ethnic Norwegian community to non-ethnic Americans settling in interspersed areas of figure 23. How will an understanding of possible large-scale landscape culture among Norwegians intersect with all three issues either implicit or explicit in Gjerde's work, i.e. 1) the presence or absence of territoriality at the scale of the individual congregation, 2) territoriality between Norwegians and other ethnicities at scales larger than individual congregations, and 3) territoriality between Norwegians and Americans?

The early date of the meridian relationship around 1870 between Palmyra and Fort Ridgley & Dale might well have been a particularly Norwegian construct with relatively few other ethnic groups contesting the "map" as it were. Figure 23 uses plat maps from 1859, just before the Sioux war, rather than the next plat series that Gjerde uses in 1888; the earlier landscape better represents the setting for major settlement beginning after the war, about ten years after surveyors had filled the township subdivisions. It is highly unlikely that any early road existed along the meridian as an influence to positioning of cemeteries. This particular meridian exhibits one of the surveying corrections--here a short west-east segment--that accounts for the narrowing of longitude lines on the earth's surface. The only non-Scandinavian church mapped by Gjerde for 1888, the 1881 Finnish church notwithstanding, is the Catholic St. Patrick's located two and a half miles west of, and not shown on, his three township map. Very late, in 1896, the Palmyra Methodist congregation forms in the southwest portion of the Palmyra Township. Forty-four of the forty-six burials here are either Norwegian or Swedish.

Gjerde's map redrawn in figure 23 reproduces from his data only the 1888 farms still associated with the three initial Norwegian churches of the meridian; again like Gjerde 1986 we see a dispersed pattern of Norwegian member owned homesteads even at this later date. The

Swedlands cemetery and church site, organized in 1874 by a large cluster of Swedes to the northeast of the study area apparently chose not to be part of any early formal township center line pattern with the Norwegians. Yet unlike the Irish church off in the next township west, the Swedlands church at its section cross point lies only two diagonal miles from the Palmyra center. Not impossibly even in the 1880's Swedland too becomes formally integrated with the Norwegians via a second meridian with the 1886 Norwegian Camp (*Konferensen* Synod) congregation to the south. This idea receives strength from a third meridian and second Swedish-Norwegian pair running from the Swedish Palmyra Covenant site, aligned east with Palmyra, down to the 1886 Norwegian Zion (Ns) cemetery/church. The 1881 Finnish churchyard might as well have incorporated meridian symbolism through its position a third of a mile west of the central meridian offset point. Even the 1877 Norwegian Franklin (Hs), whose location contributes to earlier history of the Fort Ridgely & Dale southern focus, curiously eventually pairs to the north with 1896 Palmyra Methodist.

Could multiple emulations of some primarily Norwegian landscape meaning of a Palmyra – Fort Ridgely & Dale meridian have been intentionally designed, not only at different longitudes, but across several decades as well? Both early, and later, during Gjerde's benchmark of 1888, was there a social purpose behind meridian alignments of these Scandinavian church foci, espousing varying doctrines, across eight to fifteen miles of prairie? Can causality be traced to other nationalities occupying land between northern and southern areas of the three townships: Swedes, Irish, and also German Lutherans (who sometimes went to Norwegian services and whose Missouri Synod early on was united with the Norwegian Synod). In a more functional or ecological vein no organizational need would logically connect townships; even when they become more organized, townships remain singular subordinates in to the primary unified governmental entity, the county. Even in the late 1880's few if any section roads continuously connected townships along any of the four meridian lines that pair up churches in figure 23. 1888 plat maps in these three townships, however, do show roads on virtually all section lines, with no designation of road type, ownership or maintenance. Perhaps by 1888 the plow had reached some section lines, and roads along section edges became necessary in places. But again, the good roads movement didn't take place until after the turn of the century, and county or state owned and maintained roads were few and far between before this time.

Earlier on, the modest monies that townships received from counties for rural road maintenance may well have been used on “wild” rather than “section” roads. Both geometries of unpaved roads lay on private property. Township maintained roads only existed temporarily for as long as the need existed. Early in the present research the author assumed that if Norwegian churches were being intentionally aligned along preexisting section roads, local farmers might have created special names for these stretches of roads. From conversations with both township and county officials, no such names could be found. After realizing that the roads came *after* the location of many churchyards (and not having reread Cather yet) the absence of discursive names as might be entered in church or township meeting records now becomes more understandable. Particular congregations have discursively individualizing names taken from biblical sources or even preexisting landscape features, but perhaps no comparable move crosses into that other dimension of culture, applying names to particular pieces of some conceptually large scale landscape structure.

In some 1888 plat maps of townships the surveyor drew roads on all section lines, whereas in the neighboring other, a different surveyor about the same time only drew roads on about half the section lines. In others, drawn section roads run right through small ponds or lakes, while others show a highly simplified angular detour around such features without any sense of actual topography, and perhaps of built road. The inclusion of these roads on plat maps, as part of atlases sometimes funded by private insurance or real estate companies, may have as much to do with marketing as to any engineering documentation of land use. Because of the somewhat ephemeral nature of township maintained section roads, and the volunteer basis of these organizations, precise records of roads for the first 30-40 years of settlement are extremely difficult to find. Perhaps for these reasons, Gjerde’s does not mention whether or where section roads exist in 1888, or how Norwegian community formation could have been influenced one way or another. Nor does he speak of any effect from the patterns of “wild” roads and certainly not of that from formal alignments of congregations, in this case at or echoing the meridian connecting the three townships centers.

Using a combination of Norlie (1918), *The History of Renville County*, Vol. II (Curtiss-Wedge 1916), and most importantly local pamphlets circulated within congregations, often compiled for centennials, one can piece together most of the moves that established the north and south ends of the earliest township centers meridian. These are on file either at historical

societies such as the unique Sacred Heart Area Historical Society (extensive records of a four township area on the north side of the Minnesota River) or archives of the Minnesota Historical Society in Saint Paul. On more than one occasion while visiting cemetery/church sites, congregational members mowing the churchyard generously talked about their history. At the Hauges meridian church in Gjerde's study, the conversation concluded with a gift of their 100 year anniversary pamphlet available among other literature in the churches' vestibule. This contemporary pamphlet includes five different congregations at the southern end of the meridian, including three from the earliest high and low synods. Other histories exist in the form of web blogs and occasional pages.

Both Palmyra and Fort Ridgely & Dale associate with the cross section point of their respective township centers. Camp Township, a portion shown in figure 23, organized in 1867, more or less at the same time as the 1868 formation of the purported first Norwegian Lutheran congregation in Renville County, called "Fort Ridgely", about five miles northwest of the fort itself, just over the line in the next township. Up in Palmyra, its congregation of the same name formed about two years earlier, 1872, than the township itself, 1874. The exact date of the congregation's cemetery is difficult to pin down, but probably first burials took place prior to the organization of the volunteer township committee. With no church yet built at Palmyra in 1876--this happens in 1885--one does, however, find a record of a church meeting taking place in the township meeting hall at the center intersection. Town hall structures are extremely small and economical, and often the only built feature of township center points. The reason many town are built much later, or not at all, is that meetings could take place in homes, not unlike congregation services.

The two Ns congregations at the ends of the meridian could have independently chosen their locations at township center points because of an overlap between founding members of churches and townships. As a principal cause this would amount congregational entities about six miles square, not that different in size from individual parishes seen in Valdres, figure 7. What, however, was the relationship of Palmyra settlers and their church to Fort Ridgely? One finds a record of the first burial in the Fort Ridgely congregation, 1869, less than a year after formation. But the account does not locate the cemetery. One of the reasons for the division at the south end of the meridian of the large Fort Ridgely congregation in 1874, was because of distances to church, and related disagreement about where to build a common graveyard and

eventual structure (though it is said that a predestination issue also occurred). The new congregation is “Dale” and created a northern half to Fort Ridgely in the south (this is not mapped on any historical document, however). Neither group quickly built a church, and burial locations during the early 1870’s continue to be difficult to determine. Not until 1886 do the two congregations, still in the same synod, agree to build a common house of worship, while maintaining their identity as separate Ns congregations. Surely the cemetery where they located this church, as seen in figure 23, preceded the structure by some years. Yet a search of this cemetery’s burial records shows the earliest of the 386 to be relatively late in 1881, with a dozen or so undated.

The centrally located “low” Hs congregation organized in 1870, only a couple of years after the “high” Ns church of Fort Ridgely, but early on might not have attached itself to the meridian. While meeting in homes like the Ns congregations of the southern area, the first mention of a Hauges cemetery describes the present location of Franklin, the site of 1877 originally Kf congregation, two miles directly west of the southern center point (this church later became Hs). In 1880 the Hauges congregation created their first church on the meridian by purchasing and moving the disassembled logs from the early church at Fort Ridgely & Dale.

An interesting issue in the early positioning of “high” and “low” church sites in context with the southern cross point, lies in records describing the Hauges pastor’s farm and parsonage in the northeast portion of the section right at the Camp Township center. Compounding this “high/low” web of association is that before the Fort Ridgely and Dale pair finally built their common church in 1878, they, *along with their Ns brethren from Palmyra* purchased the Hauges parsonage and rebuilt it as their own, still at the township center. The eventual 1886 church (and probably its log predecessor) sits essentially on the same property, just south of the parsonage. Given this close spatial association of the two synods, it seems likely that the Fort Ridgely and Dale cemetery close to the township center may have been used by both groups prior to 1877 when the Franklin site was established and used by the Central Hauges church (until they developed their meridian site in the early 1880’s). The almost intimate, formally expressed early spatial relationship between the two synods is not dissimilar to the early east-west pattern between original Ns Immanuel and Hs Norwegian Grove in the Ottertail example of figure 20. The role of Haugians will continue to be interesting as one moves west to the Minnesota River at Yellow Medicine. Gjerde’s 1985 volume describes emigration from the Balestrand Parish shown

in figure 6; this area, along with the rest of the Sognefjord region provided a strong locus of pietism and the Hauges church. Many of the large numbers of emigrants from the fjord ended up in Renville (ibid:5), and probably Yellow Medicine County as well.

If the three Norwegian Synod congregations, the southern pair and Palmyra up north, shared ownership of a common parsonage, and quite possibly cemetery, then obvious attention must be turned to common pastors, not unlike the Ottertail example, and their possible influence in these early formal landscape patterns. One must first emphasize, however, that pastors in America, unlike their colleagues in Norway, were not paid by the state, but by democratic congregational councils. Of course pastors formally participated in founding congregations, but groups of lay people first organized themselves, meeting in their homes prior and after formation, interviewed potential pastors, and managed all economics of their church. Most congregations shared pastors and church services might often be intermittent (not dissimilar to the way medieval Norwegian farm societies managed with a shortage of priests after the plague). While meeting records of these councils are scarce, and very brief when found (in Norwegian, and often faded), they clearly decided who to hire as well as where to locate their cemeteries and when to build their churches—though records of related discussion most often only include the pastor's salary, and costs of land and building construction.

The two Ns pastors officiating in the founding of Fort Ridgely, the Rev. Thomas Johnson 1868, and Palmyra, the Rev. J. E. Bergh 1872, traveled widely, particularly early on. In the descriptions of the first Fort Ridgely meeting, Johnson, a native of Slidre Parish in Valdres just east of Sognefjord (see again figure 7), has just arrived “from the west”, i.e. the Yellow Medicine area. Again, Tov Rudi participates in this meeting, undoubtedly in a recently built Norwegian log house. Bergh, coincidentally also comes from the Sognefjord area, just south at Voss. At the time of helping found Palmyra he also becomes the pastor of record for Fort Ridgely before the division that created Dale in 1874. At this date both Johnson and Bergh have moved west, leaving the three Norwegian Synod congregations to the common pastor of the Rev. M. O. Borge from 1874-1879, and the Rev. N. P. Xavier from 1879-1891. The Central Hauges church for its part, has three common pastors with Franklin in the period 1877-1885, and one with Zion from 1889-1892. The Camp congregation is part of the “middle” *Konferensen* Kf Synod when formed in 1886 and shares no ministers with others in this three township area.

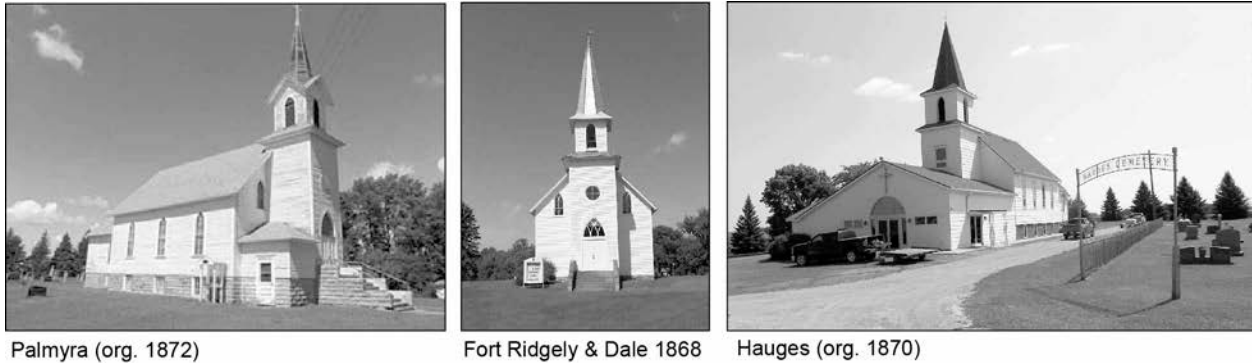


Figure 24. Three existing Norwegian churches on the meridian center lines of Palmyra, Bandon and Camp Townships, Renville County, Minnesota (Palmyra is one of the prefabricated structures built at the time, now in private ownership).

The two church structures of the north-south Immanuel meridian have the same orientation, facing south, likely in concert with the larger landscape concept. The still standing Palmyra and Fort Ridgely & Dale structures built within a year or so of each other 1885-86, also have common orientations, both facing east (again contrary to the conventional “Christian” direction with the entrance to the west). Also, both churches sit on the western side of the meridian, Fort Ridgely & Dale on the southwest corner, and Palmyra perhaps appropriately on the opposite northwest. But unlike the Immanuel example, they do not reflect the larger scale north-south meridian whose ends they seem to define. One tentative reason might have been a possible shared understanding of this meridian as the “eastern” pole of a much larger construct stretching west along and beyond the Minnesota River. If the evidence eventually permits, the eastern facing of the two churches might express a Norwegian spiritual and social flow in this direction, as well as the pastoral role of Johnson and Bergh. One also recognizes, as in Tov Rudi’s story, that Fort Ridgely staged settler movement west, not only in its protection from Indians, but as transportation hub for major wagon roads along the Minnesota.

About the same time as the building of the two Norwegian Synod churches, the central Hauges church on the opposite eastern side of the meridian orients in the traditional Christian direction, with its entrance facing west. This may not be an adherence to some universal Christian dictate, since the two Friborg Hauge churches in Ottertail probably oriented north-south, like the Immanuels, and as will be illustrated, the orientation of other Hauges churches to the west seem best understood in terms of their formal landscape context. No churches stand at Franklin, Finnish, Zion or Camp; possible orientations are not presently researched in detail either through photo collections, archived site plans (if they exist) or archaeological survey.

Finally, if these Norwegian settlers intentionally designed meridian concepts of churchyard location and perhaps church orientation even beyond the later period of Gjerde's study, how might this knowledge have changed his conclusions? Would he have recognized that this "hidden" dimension of religious landscape contributed in some way to the economic and social strength of individual "communities"? Given his penchant for good data, could he have found social and economic benefits from being symbolically integrated with different Norwegian congregations and synods at greater distances? Again the assumption of researchers was that "community" equals "congregation" among Norwegian immigrant settlers. Neither in the old country nor the new does one find a consideration of integrative effect of cultural landscape, something that quietly structures more collective relationships between *bedlag* scaled congregational groups.

A cardinal west from Palmyra?

Norlie's list of Norwegian immigrant churches in Renville County (1918:572+) does not diagram the evolutionary relationships among the three early Norwegian Synod congregations of the "eastern meridian", though they are listed, complete with organization dates, pastor's names and periods of service (though no reason for the Fort Ridgely division with Dale is given). Curiously enough, Norlie's location for the first Hauges congregation in 1870 is "four miles east of Franklin" or right on the meridian, probably referring to the location of the first parsonage and even use of cemetery at the southern cross point.

One of the deciding factors in the choice of focus area emerged from the way aspects of the four church "genealogies" separately diagramed by Norlie for Renville and Yellow Medicine counties, figure 25, potentially link together in formal landscape patterns. If the "eastern meridian" described above can be included in some largest scale Minnesota River "matix", the extent would scale to about seventy-three miles east to west. While the length of this tentative construct may have downsized within a few years on each of its ends, some evidence exists earliest on for a projected pattern from the Palmyra north meridian center west across the Minnesota River (very close to the Tov Rudi house just across the river from the Enestvelt farm) and out to the edge of the present day boundary of the state of Minnesota, figure 26. Carriers of this concept might have been congregational members like Rudi moving west, and the two pastors that officiated at the formation of Palmyra and Fort Ridgely.

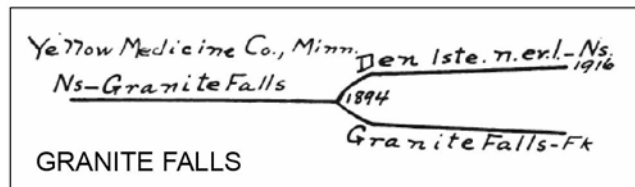
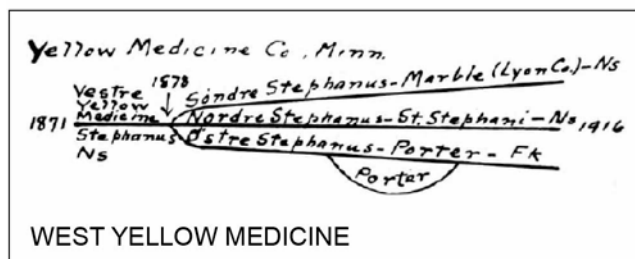
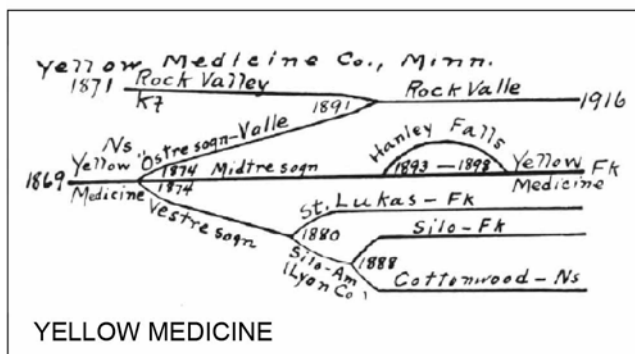
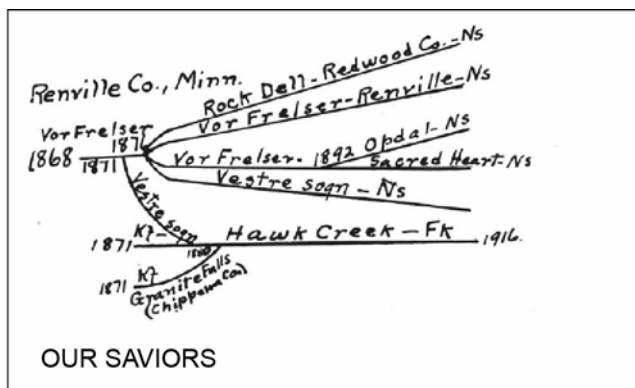


Figure 25. Norlie's (1918) evolution diagrams of four congregations in the Minnesota River "matrix" area (no diagram is drawn for the Palmyra – Fort Ridgely & Dale component).

Largely contemporaneously with Fort Ridgely and Palmyra, two additional early Norwegian Synod congregations organize one on each side of the Minnesota River towards the middle of the long east-west township center line from Palmyra,. West of the river the first cemetery and later church of one of the congregations, "Yellow Medicine", is located one mile north of the Palmyra cardinal, while to the east, "Our Savior's" first cemetery lies about five miles north and about

three miles west of the Enestvelt and Rudi farms close to the river. Our Savior's formal locations will evolve through subsequent immigration with respect to the Palmyra line. One thing that might significantly link these two congregations on each side of the Minnesota River with Palmyra (and Fort Ridgeley), apart from their less accurate location, is that all four were organized with the help of both Thomas Johnson and J. E. Bergh.

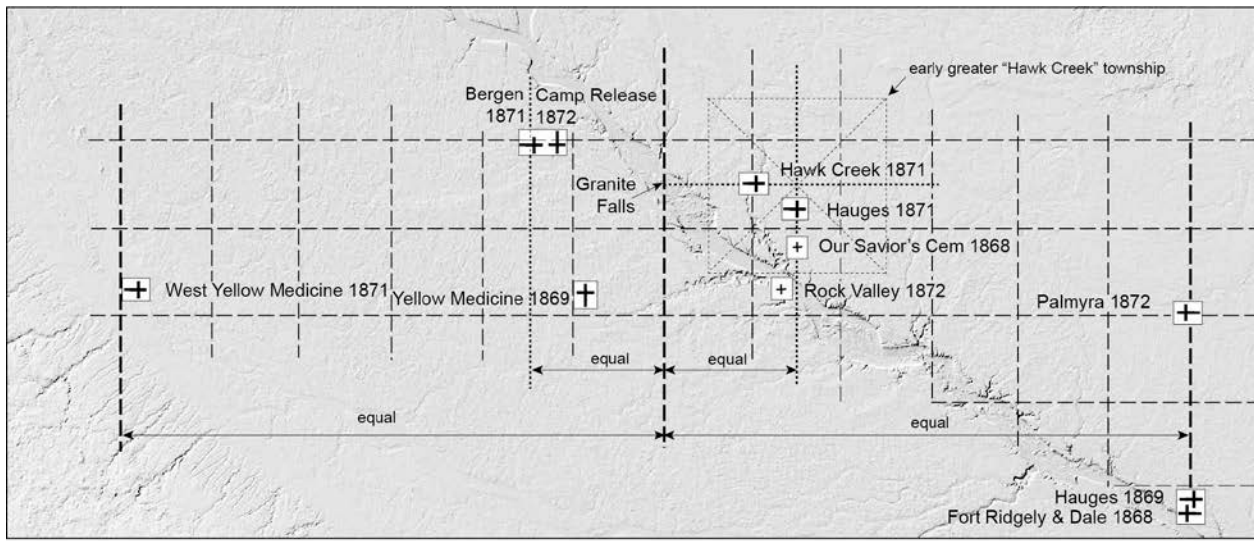


Figure 26. Earliest organized Norwegian churches in the Minnesota River “matrix” against background of township center lines (above); typical prairie landscape at the time of early cemetery location (with native grass instead of crops) without built churches, section roads, prominent farm structures or other cultural landmarks (below).

Our Savior's Ns congregation officially organized in a farm house in 1868 led by the Rev. Thomas Johnson, about six months after he helped found the Fort Ridgely congregation. Fort Ridgely and Our Savior's are held to be the oldest and next oldest congregations in Renville County. About a year after organization, Our Savior's chose a cemetery site. *This group also met with congregations from both Yellow Medicine to the west, and Ft. Ridgeley to the east to establish a common pastor.* The Rev. Thomas Johnson, however, wasn't the choice, apparently because of his dedication to helping establish congregations in a much wider region of Minnesota. In late 1871, a call was extended by all of the new Norwegian Synod churches of this emerging construct, soon to include Palmyra, to hire the Rev. Johannes E. Bergh.

It is Johnson's earliest experience here along the Minnesota River that may be most interesting with respect to the location of cemeteries. Again, reportedly he had been out west prior to the 1868 establishment of Fort Ridgeley. His travels might well have overlapped with the work of surveyors, who in 1866 finished laying out subdivisions in the two townships west and east of the Our Savior's cemetery shown in figure 27; township outlines or boundaries had been surveyed in 1857 prior to the Sioux war. Thus one finds a mix of early settlers, pastors, and surveyors simultaneously moving around this landscape prior to villages or railroads. They must have often met and talked, particularly when being lodged by a small number of settled farmers. One of the topics would have been the unusual designation of a kind of super township, "Hawk Creek", that included the four 1866 subdivided townships eventually called "Hawk Creek" (SW, organized 1867), "Wang" (NW, organized 1875), "Ericson" (NE, organized 1874), and "Sacred Heart" (SE, organized 1869). This early designation didn't last long, since the standard sized Hawk Creek and Sacred Heart townships organized relatively early in 1867 and 1869, right at the time when the Our Savior's congregation formed and cemetery location chosen.

The position of Our Savior's cemetery precisely on the border between Hawk Creek and Sacred Heart townships, figure 27, reveals not only the desire to be on the center line of the initial "super" Hawk Creek township, but additional evidence of religious interest in center meridians west of Palmyra – Fort Ridgely. Also on the greater Hawk Creek meridian, and again not unlike the eastern pattern, one finds a "low" Hauges church just north of the original Our Savior's (Ns) or "high" cemetery. The "Hoff" congregation first held a service in 1870; a year later the pastor officiating in the formal organization of this second meridian site was none other than the Rev. L. O. Rustad, who at the same time served the Central Hauges group due north of

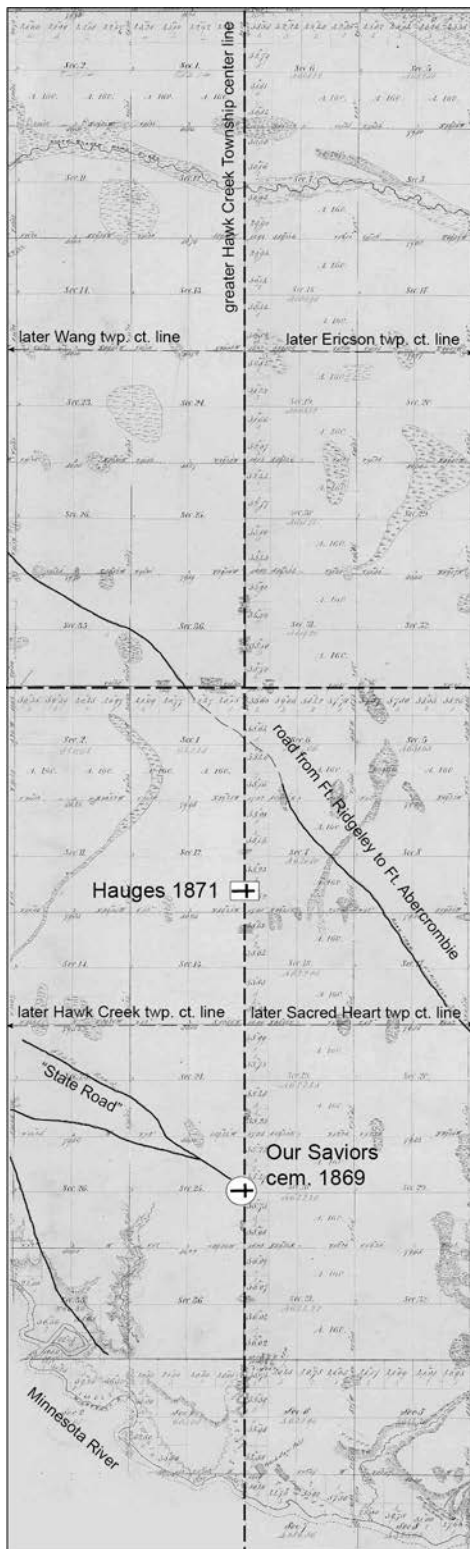


Figure 27. Early Norwegian congregations in western Renville County: Ns and Hs pair on greater Hawk Creek Township meridian center line.

Fort Ridgeley & Dale. It may be misleading, however, to include the Hoff cemetery/church location in the formation of an early greater Hawk Creek Township meridian. Though the pietistic congregation came into being about this time, the property for its cemetery was only acquired in 1878, with a church built on the site two years later. Where were people from this congregation buried in the eight years between organization and locating the meridian site, and furthermore, why this site location when around 1878 the smaller scale, typical township center lines were being selected for new meridians and churchyards—replacing the greater “Hawk Creek” composite? In fact no church was ever built on the original Our Savior’s cemetery site. The first church and new cemetery moved to the newly platted village of Sacred Heart on the new railroad in 1878-80.

Is there cemetery archaeology to be done here? The Haugians to the east may well have used the early “southern cross” cemetery (Fort Ridgeley & Dale) together with their “high” church countrymen. Both here and in the greater Hawk Creek case, later Hauges cemeteries and churches eventually locate on the meridian. Again, the presently standing Central Hauge church faces west, and not dissimilarly, its (greater) Hawk Creek Twp. exemplar, Hoff, did likewise. This church, built on the meridian in 1880 does still stand, but was moved to the Sacred Heart village in 1892, and renamed “First English Lutheran” in 1928. Not only does it follow Our Savior’s church into town, maintaining the early pair tradition, but it might also provide good evidence of when a road was built on this early meridian line (see insert on the following page). After dragging the structure across the winter landscape about a half mile into the village, movers orientated the structure west on a street several blocks diagonally SW of Our Savior’s church. Visiting the original cemetery site provides no immediate indication of where the church stood, in part because a county road cuts through the overall topographic rise that once characterized the cemetery. No plan records exist at the county of this project in the early 1890’s just after the church was moved.

The cemetery today stretches linearly along the meridian and paved county highway for over two hundred yards; its width about seventy-five yards. Because of a four or five foot crest in the site roughly in the middle along the meridian, it is here that the cut for the road is deepest. The bank between the road and the cemetery creates a very unnatural relation between the two. Graves occupy the area immediately on the top of the crest with no space for the church when at



First English Lutheran
in Sacred Heart

THE CHURCH BUILT ON THE SECTION LINE

The question of where Hoff church stood before being moved into Sacred Heart in 1892, and why it was moved was answered in a phone conversation between 95 year old Peter Oie and Elaine Johnson of SHAHS. His wife's father and grandfather were pastors. The church stood "on the crest of the hill and faced west in front of the graves". It is clear that the reason it was moved was to make room for the new county road: Mr. Oie said that the county paid to move the church.

The distance from the first row of graves to the centerline of the road is about 45', and the nave of the church plus bell tower entry is about 65', not including appended structure at the altar end of the church as it stands in town.

The church entrance area and buggy parking likely occupied a sizeable space to the west of the meridian on the hill's crest. There appears to have been no consideration for any existing or future section road. The vertical church tower might conceivably have been symbolically aligned as an *axis mundi* with the meridian.

probable
location of
Hoff church
1880 - 1892

1892 road

Greater
Hawk
Creek
Township
Meridian

this site. If the church was built right at or on the section line, as shown in the insert of the previous page, it would certainly illustrate how the primary cognitive concept of meridian laid out on an as yet featureless prairie. Using the area in front of the church to the west of the meridian line for buggy parking area, actually belonging to an owner in the adjoining section, may well have been nothing more than an extension of “wild roads” that still ran across privately owned homesteaded sections.

Moving west from the greater Hawk Creek (Our Savior’s/Hoff) meridian, the early center point of a cardinal east-west concept from Palmyra, as illustrated in figure 26, might possibly have been the intersection of the greater Hawk Creek Township center line, extended from the east, and the meridian township center line that comes closest to the most unique natural feature in the Norwegian landscape matrix, Granite Falls, shown in figure 28. The actual survey intersection point does not coincidentally superimpose with the river falls itself, but does so with the western point of the narrow peninsula feature where the river makes a sharp bend. The falls occur about 0.7 miles upstream. To this writer’s knowledge no early rural cemeteries lie on or near this survey point equidistant from the two east and west ends of the possible earliest matrix concept. But the later development of the town of Granite Falls, including a large Norwegian Lutheran congregation, will motivate additional consideration of Granite Falls as formal “middle” point.

The area just below the falls began as a small trading place, with the first ferry coming into service in 1868 (Narvestad 20). By 1872, the year the town was platted, a grist mill was operating and a year later a census lists “29 souls” (21). In 1876, a wooden wagon bridge first crosses the Minnesota River here. A small Ns congregation forms in this nascent village also in 1876 but no church site developed until 1882. Again, more will be said of Granite falls in a following section.

Moving west, and organized only a year behind Fort Ridgely, the Ns “Yellow Medicine” congregation began in 1869—two years prior to the creation of the county of the same name. The Rev. Thomas Johnson again presided at this founding. The survey plat map of figure 29 dates the filling in of township subdivisions five years earlier in 1864. The location of Yellow Medicine’s first cemetery, and later church, lies one mile north and a half-mile east of the Sandnes Township cross point. The Sandnes center lies on the same township center line as Palmyra. Good accounts of this congregation’s history, on file at the Minnesota Historical

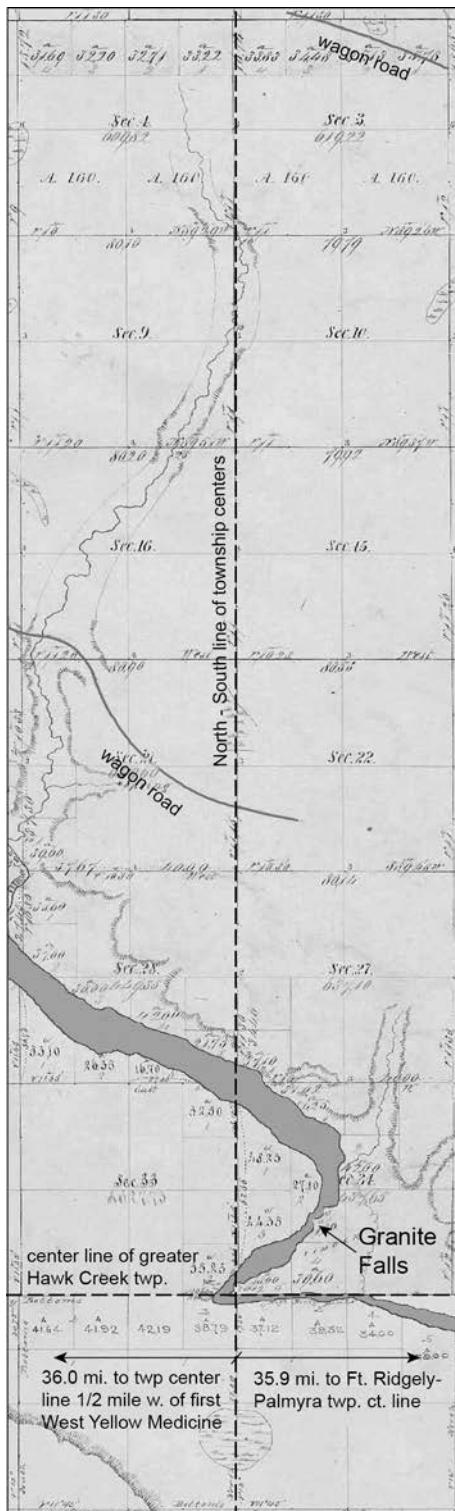


Figure 28. Longitudinal center of Minnesota River "matrix" near Granite Falls: Palmyra to West Yellow Medicine.

Society, clearly describe the date when the cemetery was actually located, 1872, with J. E. Bergh now being the “permanent” pastor along with his duties at Our Savior’s, Palmyra and Fort Ridgeley. In addition to having co-signed legally contracted pastor duties, it is not unlikely that these first four Ns congregations shared in knowledge of collective governance and settling processes, intermarried, and socialized together for these and other reasons.

Figure 29. Location of (middle) Yellow Medicine Congregation until 1879, and new cemetery in Hanley Falls after first church burns down.

It took ten years for Yellow Medicine congregation to build a church on the site, only to have it struck by lightning and burn down in 1898, after which a Yellow Medicine East cemetery was created two miles away on the same section line, near a new church to be built in the now platted and thriving town of Hanley Falls, shown in figure 29 (from observations at the original (West) Yellow Medicine cemetery, the church entrance appears to have faced south). During this ten year period people worship in farm homes, and in regard to the present thesis on cultural landscape, especially pertinent are services during warm summer months at many different designated groves along the banks of the Yellow Medicine River. The sketch of the first service at Hellick Glaim Grove is reproduced here as figure 30. This affection of Norwegian immigrants, not a few of which came from the Sognefjord and surrounding valleys, for the second most prominent landscape feature after the Minnesota River, may be evident from their



Figure 30. Services in groves along the Yellow Medicine River before congregation of same name had built their church ten years after organization in 1869 (reproduction of sketch of Hellick Glaim Grove in "History of the Yellow Medicine Congregation" n.d. page 8, on file at Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul).

adoption of the Yellow Medicine name. Geographically, these worship groves would have strung out in an east-west direction along the river, not unlike the layout of parishes in Sognefjord.

The location of their churchyard in 1872, again prior to roads or railroads in the area, may have been something of a compromise resulting in a place not on a township center line or even section cross point, but largely equidistant from the Sandnes (and Palmyra) township center line and the Yellow Medicine River. The Yellow Medicine cemeteries lie on the east-west section line closest to the river on the south. Placing the cemetery on the closest section line to the north (about the same distance) might have been uncomfortable given the greater proximity to the Sioux reservation, shown in the upper right hand corner of figure 29.

One half mile north and thirty miles west of the original Yellow Medicine cemetery site is the 1871 congregation Norlie calls "*Vestre* Yellow Medicine", map of figure 31, and diagram in figure 26. The use of "West" as a branch of the original Yellow Medicine precedes the designation of West and East Cemeteries for the central congregation in 1898. This early, farthest west cemetery might have been located close to the time of organization. The township,

blocked out in 1858, was subdivided later, toward the end of 1871. Because this site is one of the very few not located on a section line, much less a cross point, its location could have preceded the subdivision survey by several months. This could explain its location one half of a section north of the original Yellow Medicine cemetery to the east, whose 1872 date in this regard is a few months in conflict. While the well-traveled Rev. Thomas Johnson wasn't part of West Yellow Medicine's founding, his close colleague, Rev. J. E. Bergh shows up for a short time in 1871 just after the first pastor of record, the Rev. N. O. Brant. Thus a known pastoral link exists along the entire seventy plus miles from Palmyra.

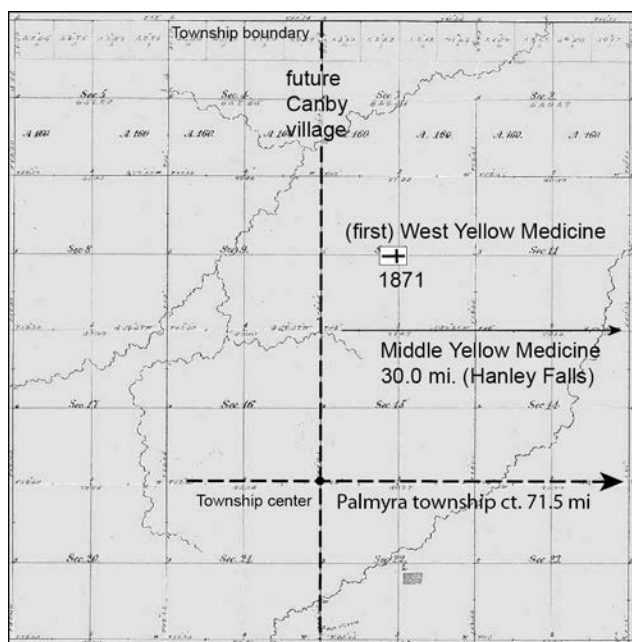


Figure 31. West Yellow Medicine congregation, probably located before township subdivision was surveyed.

Not clearly stated in pamphlet pieces of Yellow Medicine congregation history is whether the original group of this name considered themselves as a “Middle” Ns entity with regard to some “West” and “East” along the great line. Only Norlie in 1918, apparently, uses this designation for the 1871 congregation farthest west or “*Vestre*”. The first 1869 Yellow Medicine congregation apparently does not use “*Midtre*” or “Middle”, nor is the 1868 Our Savior's group, well north of the cardinal line, labled “*Østre*” or east. While the possibility that Palmyra played the “East” role for a short time very early on can be inferred from the matrix geometry in figure 26, this can't be confirmed by print histories. The congregation farthest out west undoubtedly

called themselves “West”, but perhaps only in reference to the original mother congregation of the same name. In this sense Ns Yellow Medicine had yet to spawn an eastern component to the congregation, in spite of the large scale commonalties of pastors and undoubtedly parishioners.

If the reader will return to figure 23, at the southern cross point to the east one sees the formal integration of the paired Ns or “high” church congregations of Fort Ridgely & Dale, the “low” church of Hauges, and in 1877 the Franklin “middle” or *Konferensen* (Kf) church. Returning to the greater Hawk Creek meridian, the Kf synod also organizes even more clearly contemporaneously with Ns and Hs groups. The Kf congregation closest to the hypothetical West Yellow Medicine – Palmyra cardinal, is “Rock Valley”, organized in 1871, figure 26. This initial location lies about a mile and a quarter west of the Our Savior’s - Hoff meridian, and an equal distance north of the Yellow Medicine section line (with its eventual pair of West and East cemeteries). Unlike the “eastern meridian” example which includes the Kf Franklin, Rock Valley’s first cemetery does not lie on a section line, in spite of the contemporaneity with Palmyra – Fort Ridgely formalization (when Rock Valley graves are moved later to a new location the oldest burial is listed as 1872).

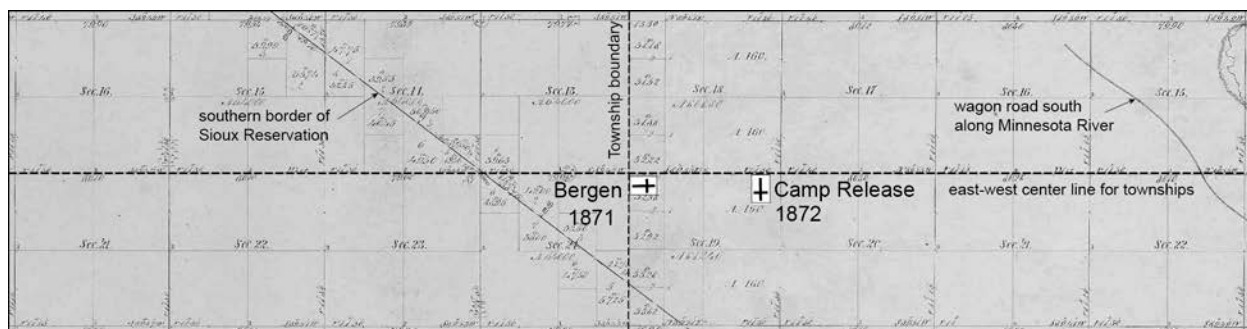


Figure 32. Early Bergen and Camp Release pair (different synods) on east-west center line for townships.

One needs to keep track of a third Norwegian pastor, the Rev. E. M. Eriksen, in the record at Rock Valley in 1872, but also serving other Kf congregations in the evolving matrix. Erikson’s parsonage is established with the 1870 Saron congregation north of the sites shown in figure 26. About seven diagonal miles southwest, and on the southern side of the river, another of Erikson’s congregation exists at the time, “Camp Release”, organized with his help in 1872, figure 32. Striking is the close pairing of this Kf cemetery/church with the already large Ns congregation of “Bergen”, organized in 1871 with neither the help of the Rev. Thomas Johnson nor the Rev. J. E. Bergh. Nevertheless, one sees formal tendencies in the location of the first

cemetery of Bergen, at a section cross point, on an east-west township center line and a north-south township boundary line. The Camp Release site lies at a complementary opposite cross point of the same section on the east-west township center line. Unlike Yellow Medicine, the most populous Norwegian church, Bergen, sits just *inside* of the Sioux reservation border. The township that contains Bergen and Camp Release was outlined in 1858 and subdivided in 1866.

Perhaps because the size of the Bergen congregation, they built their church relatively early in 1875. Perhaps the first Norwegian church structure in the Minnesota River area, its entrance orients west, again, the nominal direction of Christian churches. The later church at West Yellow Medicine (renamed at this time) follows suit, while the south facing church structure at central Yellow Medicine (before it burned down) might be seen as making a gesture to the large Ns congregation and earlier church building at Bergen. The Camp Release structure no longer stands, but the layout of its small cemetery suggests a north facing building, perhaps towards its mother church, Saron.

The two Kf congregations Rock Valley and Camp Release were initially founded and served for several decades by E. M. Erikson. His parish church Saron, location of his parsonage, however, was initially organized and served for about a year by the Rev. N. E. Vikre. The same pastor pattern also occurred at a fourth Kf congregation where Vikre helped organize in 1871, and then Erikson took over a year later. Norlie's diagram of figure 25 shows an early Our Savior's branch called "*Vestre Sogn*" (West Sogn), oddly a very early synod split from Norwegian Synod to *Konferensen*. In pamphlet history of this church, it is early on called "Granite Falls Congregation" or "West Hawk Creek", though information does not say where most of this "west" congregation lived, or where burials occurred. In 1873, an "eastern part" of the Granite Falls congregation forms, not as a doctrinal split--both still Kf--but perhaps due to considerations of travel distances and questions about where to establish a churchyard. The eventual "Hawk Creek" Kf congregation site sits on both the east-west centerline of the original greater Hawk Creek Township and on the center meridian of the two reformed western townships within. One also finds mention of some early "*Vestre Sogn*" burials at three farms within a mile or so west of the cross point where the Hawk Creek cemetery and church are eventually located.

If one follows the greater Hawk Creek Township center line west (on which Hawk Creek church also sits), as seen again in figure 26, it runs directly into the village growing at Granite

Falls. The first congregation in the town proper, a Ns group in 1876 does not establish a cemetery or church until the 1880's. Perhaps the first *Konferensen* groups lived on each side of Hawk Creek, those to the northwest being "Granite Falls" (actually in Chippewa county where Vikre and Eriksen establish a shorter lived group from 1871-1880 with apparently no churchyard); the "Eastern Part" lay to the southeast on the other side. The eventual Hawk Creek churchyard sits about a mile and a half east of the creek (and about six miles east of Granite Falls).

East - West Norwegian Synod division 1872-76

The early cardinal line that may have stretched from the Palmyra-Ft. Ridgely meridian to West Yellow Medicine, while unquestionably related to the formal "high" (Ns) church services of Johnson and Bergh, nevertheless had no yet discovered name. If it existed, this concept might not have been thought of like named congregations or parishes, but as a cultural landscape composed of a *group* of early congregations with only intermittent pastoral service and no church buildings. The primary expression of such a concept centered on the Minnesota River, and possibly Granite Falls, would nonetheless have been formalized as a ritual-like map in at least some people's minds.

Neither does any neatly defined written record exist about the 1872-1876 refinement of the possible Norwegian landscape map as early congregations obtain somewhat more regular services of a pastor. Toward this end, Ns church councils somehow collectively (not necessarily at the same time) choose to create a western group of congregations served by a new pastor, the Rev. Knut Thorstensen. The eastern congregations, as shown in figure 33, kept the Rev. Johannes Bergh, who about this time ceased to preach anywhere west of the Granite Falls divide, as well as to the far east at Palmyra. All of the Ns groups to the east in this new scaled down evolution can be found in Norlie's diagram of Our Savior's, while the western domain includes a reduced Yellow Medicine (minus its early West component), Granite Falls (distinct from the early Kf Hawk Creek-Granite Falls on the east side of the river), and Immanuel shown to the southwest of figure 33.

But again, no evidence can be found of commonly understood and discussed concepts of these two spatially opposed Norwegian Synod domains and their respective pastors at this time. Two considerations emerge: first, this clearly formalized spatial map may have been understood

at a ritual-like cognitive level, parallel, in a sense and complementary to the more consciously discursive experiences of synod doctrine, especially involving the pair of well-known preachers; secondly, the reason why no written record of this formalized spatial pattern apparently exists, might be that the social purpose of the evolving larger scale Norwegian landscape encompassed and integrated not only at a congregational but meta-synod levels as well. The development of the Ns east-west division may have been so seamless and peaceful in part because of some greater “map effect”. No records exist of any conflict in this process.

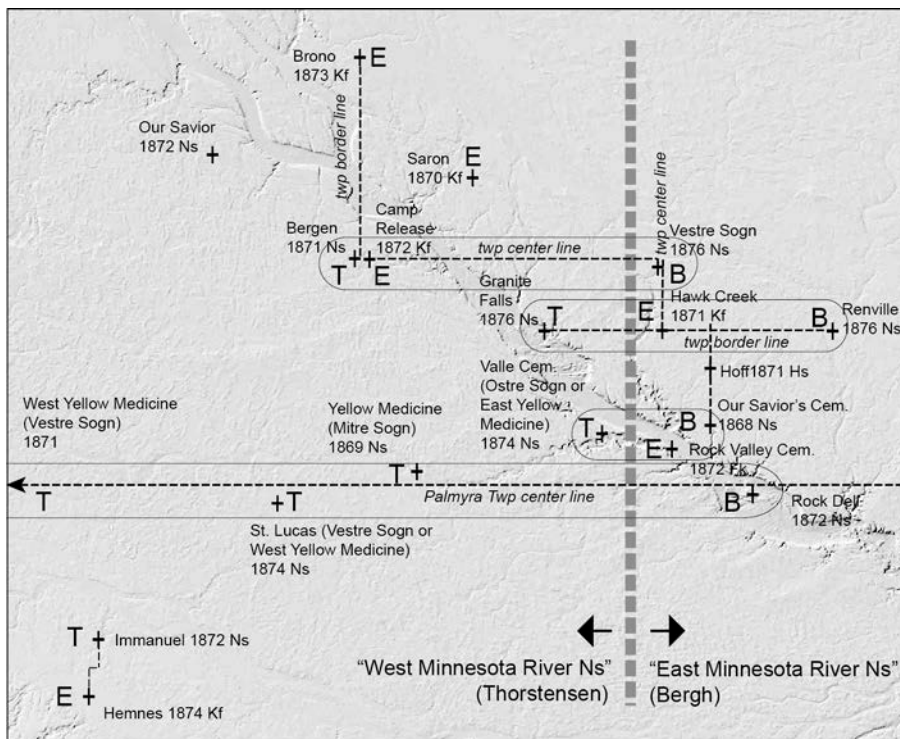


Figure 33. 1876 formal division of Norwegian Synod pastors in matrix: West = **T** (Thorstensen), East = **B** (Bergh), and location of *Konferensen* Synod churches = **E** (Eriksen).

In this 1872-76 period one finds a distinctive pairing of the two pastors along three township related east-west lines (with a less formally defined but possible fourth other). These complementary oppositions clearly operate *within* the synod, suggesting some map influence to discursive processes of the “high” church. They may explain how the overall east-west division was experienced at smaller scales. Concomitantly, and perhaps more importantly, however, one finds strong map integration of ostensibly competing synods, just as with “high”, “low” and “middle” congregations at Palmyra-Fort Ridgely and also to a lesser extent up in Ottertail. While no new Hauges congregations appear in the 1872-1876 Minnesota River matrix of figure 33, two

Konferensen “middle” churches pastored by Rev. E. M. Erikson (and a likely third) align between the east-west opposed “high” church cemetery sites. He also pairs up on north-south lines with Ns Thorstenson at Bergen-Brono, and Immanuel- Hemnes.

The reader will notice both in Norlie’s diagrams and in figure 33, the first usage of the term “*sogn*”. This name appears to be quite rare when applied to a particular congregation in Minnesota, perhaps only occurring here in the Minnesota River matrix. Yet in Norway, each parish, aside from its particular name is a “*Sogn*”. But in Norway too, it doesn’t seem to occur often as a particular congregational name (a point for future research). The best known example of *sogn* in Norway may probably be in the particular place name of Sognefjord, again figure 6. Historical farms in Norway, e.g. one in the Oslo area, also have the name “*Sogn*”. Neither the fjord nor farm names in these cases have anything to do with a Christian parish.

The first use of the term in the organization of Norwegian congregations on the sides of the Minnesota River may have been when Yellow Medicine (*Mitre* or Middle) parted ways with its early “West Yellow Medicine” component and created a new western replacement: “*Vestre Sogn*” (also called St. Lukas). The “*Ostre Sogn*” opposite, with the original Yellow Medicine in the middle, is the 1874 cemetery also called “Valle” in figure 33. Valle cemetery sits on a cross point approximately a half mile south of the confluence of the Yellow Medicine and Minnesota Rivers. Possibly, one ventures, that in this area, the use of the term “*sogn*” didn’t mean “parish”, whether “western” and “eastern”, in Norwegian, but referred to the early association of Yellow Medicine congregation along the river of the same name. Why, one might ask, within the same synod groups of settlers, would one cease to use the “mother” designation of the river, replacing it with a less meaningful combination of direction and universal term for “parish”?

But how did Norwegians in Our Savior’s (eastern) Ns domain use the term? “*Vestre Sogn*” became a formally recognized independent Ns congregation in 1876, a peaceful division within the Our Savior’s congregation because of travel distances; Bergh served as pastor of both. Its cemetery and eventual church lies on the central meridian of Wang and Hawk Creek Townships, about three-quarters of a mile south of the Wang Township center. Earliest cemetery usage may have overlapped with groups from farms just to the west, mentioned above in context with the early Kf Hawk Creek church. Both cemeteries of these two neighboring congregations, but different synods, lie on the same township center meridian, about two miles apart. While Vestre Sogn is the westernmost congregation in the eastern Ns domain served by the Rev. Bergh,

it has no “*Ostre Sogn*” counterpart. The easternmost congregation is Renville--on the Granite Falls – Hawk Creek line--which appears to have been a rural location at or near the village of the same name platted two years later in 1878. If Vestre Sogn meant “west parish” why do no other “*sogn*” names exist in the east Ns domain?

Part of Vestre Sogn’s meaning will be discussed in sections below as this meridian develops with new congregations and evolving synods. A particular connection of people mapping this meridian may have existed with the revising Yellow Medicine congregation and their possible *sogn* associations to that river. The Ostre Yellow Medicine (Valle) congregation’s early cemetery was positioned three miles west of the Hawk Creek-Vestre Sogn meridian, and eventually moved to this line. In 1874-76, this township center line may already have had meaning as the longitude where the two Minnesota River Ns domains formally link. Integrated here, perhaps, is the fact that many of the Norwegian immigrants to Vang Twp. (location of both Hawk Creek and Vestre Sogn) came from the Valdres area in Norway, only twenty or so kilometers from the easternmost reach of Sognefjord. Vang, a parish in Valdres, again, is the birthplace of the Rev. Johnson (Slidre). Bergh, as also mentioned, emigrated from the Voss area, where his farm may have been similarly only twenty or thirty kilometers south of the fjord. One can also remind the reader of the proximity of the 1871 Hauges congregation (Hoff) only about four diagonal miles east-southeast as the crow flies from Vestre Sogn and Hawk Creek (on the greater Hawk Creek meridian with Our Savior’s). Again, the pietistic movement began in Sognefjord, and although the three page hand written Hoff (First English) church history does not mention specific places in Norway where people came from, from Gjerde’s discussion of Hauges people in Camp Township (Palmyra – Fort Ridgely meridian) it seems not unlikely that these Sogners settled as well near the Minnesota River.

Finally from the map of figure 33, most striking, perhaps, are the east-west lines that integrate two of the three early synods—“high” (Ns) and “middle” (Kf)--and their respective pastors, Thorstensen (Ns) , Eriksen (Kf), and Bergh (Ns). “Low” church (Hs) congregations during this period are limited to Hoff, though integrated on the meridian with earliest Our Savior’s. Vertical connections between Ns and Kf congregations along meridians seem less prominent, though occur between Hawk Creek-Vestre Sogn, and between Immanuel and Hemnes. Symbolically, given the experience of these immigrants in folk Norway, not impossibly the Ns pair of Thorstensen and Bergh conceptually emulate a divided east-west farm

(within the family or synod), while Eriksen seems to be associated with north-south axes (Brono/Saron-Camp Release, Hawk Creek-Rock Valley and Immanuel-Hemnes).

Formalization of the far West after 1878

About two years after the Rev. Knut Thorstensen ceased to make the rounds to this westernmost Ns congregation in 1876 (his brief service to West Yellow Medicine not included in figure 33), a major internal division occurs for reasons of growing population and travel distances. The West Yellow Medicine congregation breaks off to become three new independent Ns congregations all served by the Rev. O. H. Hoel. Why would the new congregations decide to change from their landscape related “Yellow Medicine” name to St Stephanus? Perhaps simply because of the awkwardness of fusing the West Yellow Medicine name with spatial designations of the new locations, “North”, “South” and “East”, as the congregations designated themselves, figure 34? Did this area, now associated with the village of Canby platted in 1876, no longer play a “west” role in the largest scale Norwegian and predominantly Ns map? Of course no records can be found of church council meeting minutes discussing these issues.

Clearly, however, the three new congregations intended both a spatial and named expression of their social, doctrinal, and pastoral commonalities. Not unlike North and South Immanuel and North and South Friborg in Ottertail, North and South Stephanus appear to create a new meridian (including the nascent village of Canby). Even though South Stephanus lies one mile west of the township center meridian, its half mile distance south of the east-west township center line suggests an association to the township center, on the meridian with the original West Yellow Medicine cemetery and Canby. South Stephanus later takes the name “Marble” in part reflecting its spatial proximity to the township of this name and its center. From the layout of the South Stephanus cemetery, where no church still stands, the building entrance appears to have faced east in concert with the road entering perpendicularly from the meridian. It is unlikely, however, considering the late subdivision surveying and settlement of this area, that in 1878 a straight road connected north and south churches.

East Stephanus also sits one mile west of the adjacent township center meridian. But spatially, it only generally lies east of the North-South Stephanus meridian relying perhaps primarily on the congregation name “East” to link to either of the other two congregations of the division. This being said, two years later a Thorstensen served Ns congregation, Silo, organizes

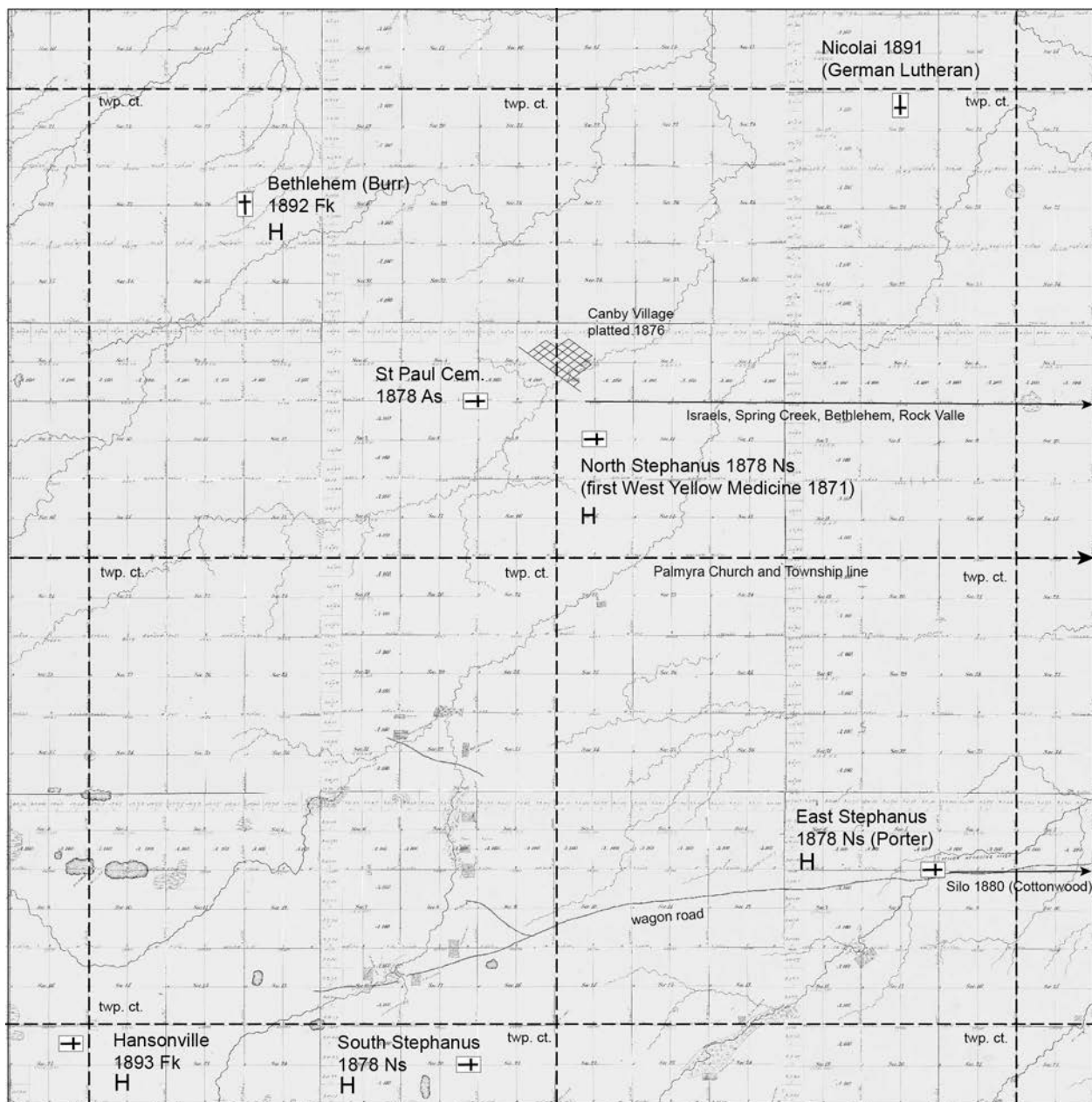


Figure 34. Reorganization of West Yellow Medicine congregation after 1876 to Stephanus, et. al.; all Norwegian churches except St. Paul served by pastor O.H. Hoel (H).

on the same section (not township center) line twenty-five miles to the east. In 1891 the German Lutheran Nicolai congregation locates a half mile off due north of East Stephanus, on its township's east-west center line. East Stephanus's site lies right on the wagon trail marked on the earliest plat map in figure 34, which may have influenced its location. In 1881 a railroad line loading and refueling stop is built about a mile diagonally northeast of South Stephanus (up through Canby). The congregation eventually takes the name of "Porter" from the railroad stop.

Do formal patterns of Norwegian settlers in the “new” far west, as it were, provide further evidence of these non-discursive, ritual-like processes? In the 1872-76 division of the Norwegian Synod, just prior to Stephanus, et.al., Thorstensen took over duties in the western domain without many opportunities to be involved in creating new large-scale landscape pattern. O. H. Hoel, however, was completely on board from the beginning of the three Stephanus congregations. With the exception of East Stephanus (eventually Porter), North and South Stephanus seem to replicate formalized meridian patterns in Ottertail and Palmyra-Fort Ridgeley, continuing the mystery about comparative influence of particular pastors and congregations. Did Hoel share this propensity with his synod colleagues Johnson and Bergh? Or were the congregations themselves, independent as they were, carriers of these concepts as they moved west? These farmers, after all, were most experienced in mapping the abstract grid system on the land.

The positioning of the Hansonville cemetery (organized 1893) fifteen years after Stephanus, clearly exhibits formal tendencies at a relatively late date. This iconic site, figure 35, rests right at the township cross point, aligned with South Stephanus five kilometers to the east. Their site orientations and common location in southwest quadrants speak to a conceptual formality linking the two. The churches, neither still standing, most likely also shared the same east facing orientation. As dramatic as are the east-west site definitions created by the long rows of trees, at both sites, one cannot be certain when they were planted.

At the time of the location of the Hansonville cemetery, a section road in this more sparsely populated area may not yet have connected with South Stephanus. The first township plat maps available after the original subdivision in 1871, date from 1913 and 1915 (unlike 1888 maps farther east). Even then it seems that the county took liberties with these drawings, e.g. no road appears along the east-west township center line in Hansonville, but when continuing east, one exists on the Marble plat map.

Returning to the question of congregation vs. pastor influence in pattern creation, the new Hansonville group not unsurprisingly is served by the pastor of the three Stephanus churches, O. H. Hoel. When established, Hansonville belongs to the 1890 unification of three synods: *Konferensen* whose presence in the Minnesota River matrix already exists at four locations, the Norwegian *Augustana* group defined as a minor doctrinal split from *Konferensen*, and then the “high” or Norwegian Synod now called in places “Anti-Missouri” for its departure from



Hansonville (org. 1893)



South Stephanus (org.1878)



Figure 35. Axial east – west site formality Of Hansonville and South Stephanus (churches no longer standing).

participation with the German Lutheran Missouri Synod. This combination of three synods logically is named “United Norwegian Lutheran Church” or *Forenede Kirke* (Fk). Enough of the Ns doctrine remains at Hansonville for parishioners to be comfortable in hiring O. H. Hoel. While he may also have been the only reasonably proximate pastor, his Hansonville service may as well express an integrating, non-discursive relationship of this congregation to the western portion of the Minnesota River matrix (with historical connections to the whole).

Besides Hansonville, the St. Paul’s congregation adjacent to the early Canby village may be another case of landscape integration out west. Organized in 1878 contemporaneously with

Stephanus (but not served by O. H. Hoel), this congregation is Norwegian *Augustana*, the synod later united at Hansonville. Norwegian *Augustana* adherents split from the original “middle” or *Konferensen* synod over disagreement of what to include in catechism. Thus people in St. Paul’s congregation may well have known people in the active *Konferensen* congregations of Camp Release, Hawk Creek, or Rock Valley. This latter cemetery, Rock Valley again in figures 26 & 34, lies only a quarter mile north of the section line that extends forty-five miles west to St. Paul’s (further development of this line will be discussed in the following section). St. Paul’s also sits on a north-south section line running down to the entrance to South Stephanus. Was the location of St. Paul’s directly west of Rock Valley an attempt to “correct” the pre-subdivision location of the original West Yellow Medicine? We will see that the later *Konferensen* site to the east, an evolution of Rock Valley, creates a “hinge” point with the Hawk Creek – Vestre Sogn meridian; does St. Paul, also essentially *Konferensen*, play this same roll out west?

New congregations in the Yellow Medicine “Sogn”

About ten years after lightning hit the church at the original Yellow Medicine churchyard, burning it to the ground, in 1898 the congregational focus moved into Hanley Falls, by now a growing railroad town. Their new cemetery, however, while of necessity being on the edge of the town proper, nevertheless sits two miles east on the same section line as the original cemetery. As shown earlier in figure 29, both cemeteries, now “West” and “East” establish identical positions on the north side of the early east-west line that might have associated as a middle location with West Yellow Medicine and Palmyra at the extreme ends. This small scale cemetery division at the center of the original congregation, however, does not represent a congregational split as such.

The church history of Yellow Medicine Congregation identifies which of these new larger scale originally Norwegian Synod groups were defined by “North”, “West”, and “South” appellations, apparently used internally, but not included as part of the principal names of the churches, figure 36. “Silo” (“South”) is earliest in 1880. Norlie’s listing in 1918 only identifies this location as being “in” the village of Cottonwood, though it is likely that the first churchyard preceded the railroad village and both cemetery and church location may have been later altered by development. The center of the village lies about a half mile west of the township center line (meridian) associated with the mother church five and one half miles north. The later 1892

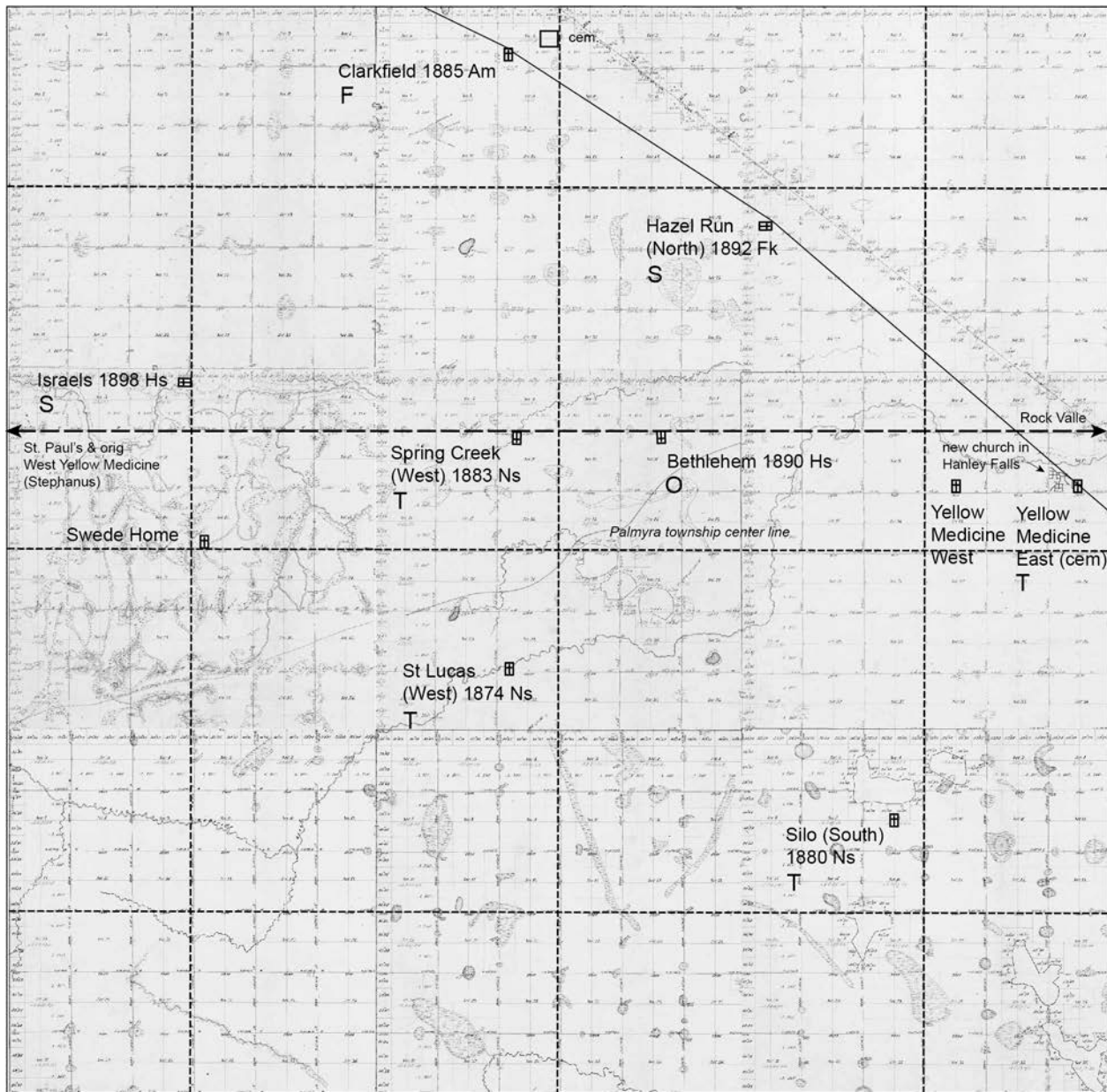


Figure 36. Evolution of Norwegian congregations in west central matrix after 1876: Norwegian Synod/Foreneded = **T** (Thorstensen), Hauges Synod = **S** (Strand) & **O** (Oppegard), Anti-Missouri Synod = **F** (Fjellstad). Cardinal appellations of daughter churches of (middle) Yellow Medicine congregation.

“North” congregation “Hazel Run”, named after its township, does not associate with this meridian though it sits a half mile from the east-west center line of Hazel Run Twp. The village of Hazel Run was platted in 1884 as a somewhat typically spaced railroad stop between Hanley Falls and Clarkfield, both platted in the same year. When organized, the Hazel Run Norwegian Lutheran church belonged to the United or *Forenede* Synod, similar to the posture of the “South” or Silo counterpart to Yellow Medicine. Even though the Ns Rev. Thorstensen continued to

serve Silo after it became *Forenede*, Hazel Run was the only congregation of the six Yellow Medicine churches (including Valle to the east) that he never served. The Hazel Run minister, J.S. Strand takes over Thorstensen's churches when he retires in 1884. The orientations and exact locations of these two early (North and South) village related churches are presently undetermined.

To the west in the Yellow Medicine "Sogn", St. Lukas, as mentioned, was originally called *Vestre Sogn* at its organization in 1874, and continues to be thought of as "West" in the evolving congregations served by Thorstensen. Though located a quarter mile west of a township center line, it apparently had no original alignment with other churchyards. This may have changed with the addition of a second "West" congregation "Spring Creek", Ns organized in 1883. Did its location due north of St. Lukas create a western meridian of the "Sogn"? Spring Creek mimics St. Lukas' position about three quarters of a mile west of the township center cross point. The standing church at St. Lukas faces south, while the presently churchless Spring Creek cemetery suggests a logical church orientation to the north, the axes of the two "West" Yellow Medicine churches aligned with their altar ends facing each other.

The existence of a third Norwegian church in the town of Clarkfield on this possible 1880's western meridian of Yellow Medicine, figure 36, raises questions about whether railroad created villages participated in Norwegian landscape concepts. At the time Clarkfield Lutheran Church organizes in 1885, one year after platting integral to the new Wisconsin, Minnesota & Pacific Railroad, Norlie lists its congregation as Anti-Missouri, with a different pastor than the Yellow Medicine "Sogn". By 1885, However, Spring Creek has also become Anti-Missouri, yet continues to be served by Thorstensen, revealing the close or indifferent doctrinal relationship between the two synods. Consider the possibility that the two "West" Yellow Medicine churches of Spring Creek and St. Lukas conceptually aligned with each other as an expression of their partnership in the greater congregation's "West" definition. Then if a new pattern element, the railroad diagonal, adds the first large scale, formal, landscape artifact—other than cemetery alignments--might Clarkfield's location have been influenced this meridian concept in the minds of Norwegian farmers living in the area? Their church after all organizes within a year of the town platting, quite contemporaneous compared to the usual time it takes for people to begin to form a village or town, and eventually organize a non-rural church.

The often cited figure of “about seven miles” between railroad stops on these first steps to an agriculturally industrialized landscape turns out to be only a rough measure. Among the ten villages or stops on the line that includes Clarkfield, the intervals are 6.2, 5.8, 4.6, 6.2, 4.9, 6.2, 5.2, 6.2, and 9.9 miles. Surveyors, it seems, had considerable latitude in locating train stops, and could have responded to the desires of local Norwegians within margins of these distances. While the location of two Norwegian churches in Clarkfield on a meridian with Spring Creek and St. Lukas could be coincidental, multiple examples of seemingly intentionally designed north-south alignments of churchyards have already been illustrated. In the present case, the four churches of this 10.4 mile line only vary from a true meridian by about 130 yards.

Norlie provides no information about the 1889 United Norwegian Lutheran Church on the axis in town, but one recalls that this union of three synods would not be seriously antithetical to either the Anti-Missouri leanings of Clarkfield Lutheran, or the evolutions of the Norwegian Synod groups at Spring Creek and St. Lukas. By 1885 Spring Creek (along with Silo) has become Anti-Missouri, similar to Clarkfield. In 1890, just a year after the United Norwegian Lutheran Church is built in Clarkfield, both St. Lucas and Spring Creek become part of the *Forenede* (United) synod. Silo becomes *Forenede* two years earlier. The Rev. Thorstensen continues to preach to all in the Yellow Medicine “Sogn” through these doctrinal changes, with the exception of Clarkfield (and perhaps the later United Lutheran church there).

Consider the visually remarkable church axis as Clarkfield’s main street, on the meridian, culminating north at Clarkfield Lutheran, figure 37. From an “urban” design perspective, this appears to be an extremely formal, clearly designed feature. Furthermore, the town cemetery lies cardinally close to due east of the church as meridian climax and on the north-south township center line to which the parallel symbolism of the four church meridian possibly refers. The first Clarkfield Lutheran structure was replaced, according to the stone on the site, in 1964 by the building seen in figure 37. Its orientation, as well, likely faced south toward the other three aligned churches on the meridian.

The new railroad from Clarkfield to Hanley Falls in 1884, with a stop at Hazel Run, figure 36, would have been perceived as an unusually formal, straight line across a prairie still largely without section roads (contemporaneous with the Nebraska example). The locations of Hanley Falls and Hazel Run, perhaps unlike Clarkfield, seem uninfluenced by any Norwegian landscape matrix. Hanley Falls forms about a mile and a half from the mother Yellow Medicine

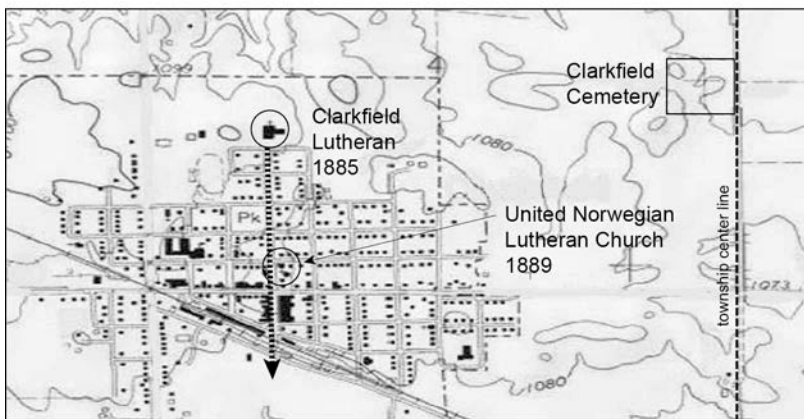


Figure 37. Prominent north-south street axis of Clarkfield with Clarkfield Lutheran centered at apex; location of town cemetery east of church on township center line.

church, and the Hazel Run congregation (1892) doesn't organize until eight years after the railroad. After the Yellow Medicine church burns down in 1898, the presence of some of its congregants in Hanley Falls might have led to the creation of a geometric relationship with the new railroad as landscape element. Clarkfield and Hazel Run to the northwest preexist on the line, and the new East Yellow Medicine cemetery lies not only on the east-west section line with the original Yellow Medicine churchyard, but 150 yards from the train tracks (more will be said about the Hanley Falls church in a following section). Three additional Norwegian congregations subsequently organize on this railroad line to the east, again prompting questions about possible integration with earlier Norwegian concepts of landscape.

As integrated as the matrix appears during the synod changes of the 1880s and 90s, related primarily to continuation and changes in the "high" (Ns) and "middle" (Kf) doctrines, the

“low” Hauges adherents are not to be excluded. In 1890, the Hauges congregation “Bethlehem” positions itself on the section line connecting St. Paul (and West Yellow Medicine/Stephanus) in the far west, Spring Creek (and its meridian relationship) and Valle (East Yellow Medicine) at the confluence of the Yellow Medicine and Minnesota Rivers, figure 36. From the disposition of the Bethlehem cemetery site, its missing church structure likely oriented similarly north-south as did Spring Creek. These two churches clearly perceived as a prairie pair only a couple miles apart, provide a third example similar to the relationship of the Central Hauges churchyard to Ns Fort Ridgeley & Dale, or the pairing of Hoff with Our Savior’s cemetery on the greater Hawk Creek Township meridian.

A second Hauges congregation, “Israels”, comes into being in 1898 a mile north of the long east-west cardinal on its township meridian center line. Israels standing church faces east, perhaps to the other Hauges congregation of Bethlehem. A group of Swedes locate Swede Home churchyard right at the township cross point (Swede Prairie Township), on the Palmyra line and directly south of Israels. The small standing church faces south. As another measure of integration, the Hauges pastor at 1898 Israels, J. S. Strand also serves at the United (Fk) congregation in Hazel Run. Strand, again, takes over the Yellow Medicine congregations when Thorstensen retires in 1894.

The Hawk Creek-Rock Valle meridian in the eastern domain

Whereas the western domain of the Norwegian landscape centered on the Minnesota River were served primarily by the Reverends Thorstensen and Strand, to the east, the Rev. Bergh had been part of the earliest circuits of the “whole” with Johnson. For decades after, he remains the pastor of record of the Ns Our Savior mother and daughter congregations, see again diagram of figure 25. The first Our Savior’s congregation, whose cemetery might well have been located soon after organization in 1869, continued to meet in homes for a number of years, not building a church (and new cemetery) until 1880 in Sacred Heart, two years after platting of this new railroad village about three miles north of the original cemetery, enlarged map figure 38. The Hs Hoff congregation, for its part, again possibly sharing the original cemetery, built their first church and cemetery in the same year less than a mile south of the village. As discussed earlier, this structure was moved into Sacred Heart in 1892 to make room for county section road, see insert page 81. And again, both early Ns and Hs congregations were positioned on the center line

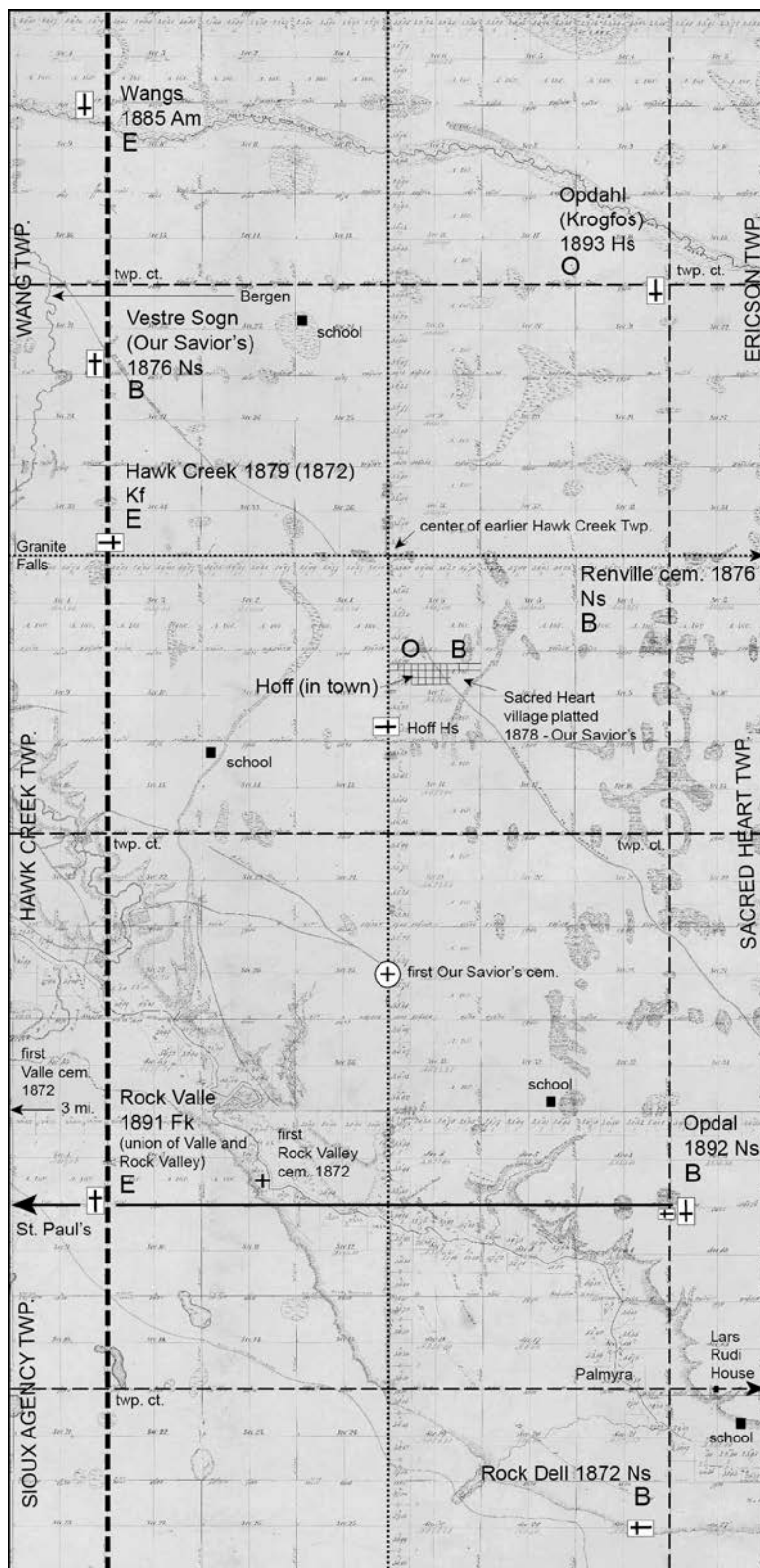


Figure 38. Evolution of Norwegian congregations in east central Matrix after 1876: Norwegian Synod = **B** (Bergh), Hauges Synod = **O** (Oppedahl), *Konferensen/Forenedet* Anti-Missouri Synod = **E** (Eriksen). Locations of schools.

of the “super” Hawk Creek Township; a few years later this meridian separated the conventionally sized townships of Wang and Hawk Creek on the west, and Ericson and Sacred Heart on the east.

From a formalist design perspective, if creating meridians and east-west cardinals largely in concert with township center geometry had been understood by various actors key to a new Norwegian landscape--one centered on the Minnesota River--then it perhaps became imperative to reestablish the symbolic meridian lost when the greater Hawk Creek Township dissolved. A move in this direction has already been discussed, i.e. the 1876 establishment of the Vestre Sogn daughter congregation of Our Savior’s right on the new (western) township center meridian, figure 38. While directly on the meridian, it lies not right at the Wang Township cross point, but about a mile south. Farther south on this meridian, and about three years later, Hawk Creek finally located their cemetery still in Vang Township but right at its border line (the center line of the earlier greater Hawk Creek Township). Vestre Sogn people did not complete their church until 1882, while Hawk Creek finishes its structure in 1880. Thus a flurry of church building occurs in the early 1880’s, two in the Norwegian Synod (Our Savior’s and Vestre Sogn), one each in *Konferensen* (Hawk Creek), and Hauges (Hoff).

Recalling Hawk Creek’s association with “Granite Falls” divisions of the *Konferensen* group (but still east of the Minnesota River, not in the village) the new churches’ west orientation may be understandable. Vestre Sogn, for its part, perhaps oriented its building to express a new western Our Savior’s meridian. While lightning also hits and destroys the original church in 1913, the smaller chapel now standing in the churchyard parallels the meridian and faces south to Hawk Creek and Rock Valley.

Both Vestre Sogn and Hawk Creek reside in Wang Township, whose name comes from the Vang parish in Valdres, again just east of Sognefjord in Norway. Given the location of the two churchyards on the township meridian in the early 1880’s, had the township organization created five years earlier built and maintained a road along this line? If so, did this contribute a more functional, transportation reason for the location of these sites two miles apart? While earliest township records are again very few and far apart, given their quasi-governmental status, for Wang one finds a recorded list of ten motions passed in the years from 1875 to 1900 (paper on file with SHAHS n.d., translated by historians from the Norwegian):

1876: “Special Town Meeting, by-law passed: Horses and cattle was (sic) allowed to roam at large for the year 1876 except Bools (sic) over 2 years and stallions over 18 months”

1877: “By-law passed allowing a man to have only dog or pay fine”

1878: “Board of Supervisors assessed all inhabitants ages 21 to 50 for 2 days highway labor and a road tax of 40 cents per \$100 of real estate value.”

1878: Examples of Estray notice filed: “Taken upon lands occupied by me in Town of Wang, one dark bay mare about 7-8 years old small of size and in good order and one horse dark bay with white spot in forehead and one on the nose also 2 white spots on the left side. He is also small in size. They were taken upon on the 8th day of May, 1878. Peter Norman. Residence West ½ of NE ¼ Sec 18”

1879: “By-law passed that all roads should be open on May 1st, 1879. Any person who keeps fence over a road should pay \$1 each day the fence stands.”

1883: “First Bridges, Special Town Meeting. Voted to discontinue sites where bridges were to be located and to locate one between sections 21 & 28, and one between sections 7 & 8 Both to be built in 1883 across Hawk Creek. To be built on white oak pilings.”

1884: “Motion to build bridge between Sections 21& 28 near C. O. Narvestad, the same as between sections 7 & 8.”

1888: Estray Notices filed: “Taken upon on lands owned by me in town of Wang, Renville Co. Minnesota where I reside 2 bay mares one of them with white strip in forehead and white front legs, the other with white hind legs. They are about 6 and 8 years old. Were taken up on the 28th day of May, 1878.”

1888 and 1889: “Motion to use Norwegian language at these annual meetings.”

1889: “Motion: Supervisors to find out if there was a public cemetery on land of Evin Boe.

One looks for evidence in this list of historian selected excerpts (possibly based on a representation of typical issues) of when township roads were built along section lines. The first township plat map available after surveyed subdivisions in the late 60's or early 70's appears in 1888, primarily showing ownership of farm property. One finds no definition of any county

owned roads, and presumably all section line roads drawn would have been on private property and not registered in county records like farm ownership itself. In Wang 1888, only nine of the 84 possible section lines are *not* drawn with roads on them (including those shared with bordering townships). In Hawk Creek to the south, irregularly shaped along the Minnesota River, about one third of sixty section lines do *not* have roads drawn. The township with the fewest drawn roads of the four (including Sacred Heart) is Ericson where the numbers are about half and half. Specifically in terms of the “western” meridian in question, the section line in Hawk Creek Township directly south of Hawk Creek church (again in Wang) has no road drawn in 1888.

Very little in the short list of township motions above speaks to any extensive township building and maintenance of roads even up to 1888 where they appear, perhaps wishfully, in some numbers. Whoever selected these motions for Wang history likely lived some years later in a landscape where virtually all section lines were roads, where townships had become quite active in their maintenance, and where these writers likely had personal experience in either being on township councils or knowing well people on them. Nevertheless, the first mention of any road grading is in 1919. Earlier on it livestock clearly were grazing on open lands. The 1878 motion that all residents had to contribute highway labor must have referred to “wild” roads, and that in 1879 they had to kept them open with no fences, as might be the case perhaps where smaller farmstead fenced areas conflicted with natural roads running across sections. While the first bridges in 1883 could have been located on section lines with an eye to the eventual complete tillage of land, they occur only five years before the 1888 plat maps show a large number of section roads, particularly in Wang. We know from the 1888 motion, perhaps to the contrary that people are still rounding up stray livestock on their property.

Farther down the time list of Wang township records, in 1916 they decide not to spend money building a small town hall for meetings at the cross point, as occurs eventually in many townships. Schoolhouses could have been used for these purposes along with those of some congregations who hadn’t yet built their church. Little has presently been said about the location of public schools, properties for which can be legally part of township law. Among Norwegian Lutherans in this earlier period, parochial schools do very occasionally occur, but are not typical in the primary sequence of site development from cemetery to church. Figure 38 includes the locations of early schools in this map of portions of the four (greater “Hawk Creek”) townships.

Schools seldom align in relation to centerline pattern, though they understandably sit on section lines dispersed through the township. The distance of any farm to a school was ideally about two miles.

Both Hawk Creek and Vestre Sogn cemeteries around 1875 likely were positioned on the township center meridian without a section line road between them, different synods that they were. In 1885, a majority of parishioners in Vestre Sogn became disaffected with the Norwegian Synod and left the congregation to form a new Anti-Missouri group. Their choice of property for cemetery and following church aligned quite close to the Hawk Creek/Vestre Sogn meridian one mile from the northern border of Wang Township. These Norwegians continue the association of this Renville area with Valdres in the mother country by naming the new church “Wang Lutheran”, again after the Vang parish in the upper part of Valdres, figure 7. This split may have been as much about old ties from Norway as synod doctrine, since most of the people that left Vestre Sogn came from Valdres. Many new members in the following years emigrated as well from this region just east of Sognefjord. Unlike the evolution from Ns to other synods in the western domain of the Minnesota River matrix, where Thorstensen continued preaching to the same people in the same physical church but with doctrinal variations, on the Our Savior side, Rev. Bergh may have held more conservative views of doctrine, perhaps influencing the Vestre Sogn split. He leaves Vestre Sogn in 1888, about fifteen years before retiring from his other Ns congregations on the east side.

Vestre Sogn folk may well have developed good social relationships with *Konferensen* countrymen of Hawk Creek just two miles south on the meridian. After the Wang group hired an Anti-Missouri pastor for a couple of years, they become *Konferensen* as well, meaning that the Rev. E. M. Erikson after 1887 served both Wang and Hawk Creek congregations (on both sides of Vestre Sogn). To this day these two churches get together yearly for socials such as picnics, and of course share in Wang Township council membership. In the old country, and undoubtedly around Valdres in the latter 1880's, the entrance of any farm building toward north could still have had fearful connotations of making contact with the powerful world of spirits. Considering the orientation of Wang church, a very rare notation of an infrequent council meeting to decide the new churches' orientation exists in their records on file at the Minnesota Historical Society.

[all microfilm ALC records for churches in Renville and Yellow Medicine counties were examined; most had lists of marriages, baptisms and deaths in these early years, but very few had council meeting minutes; while the Norwegian handwriting is understandable, often the records are quite faded]

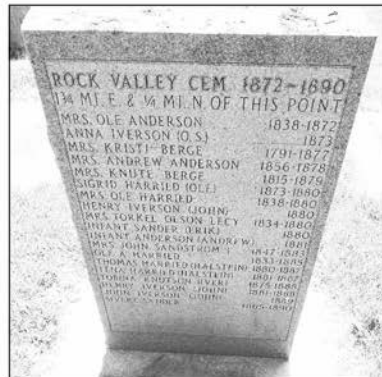
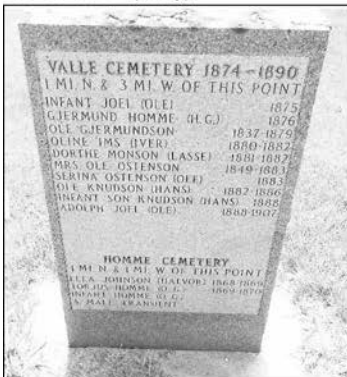
Unfortunately the very brief Wang council meeting records give no detail on the issues actually discussed, only topics. The church orients on an axis parallel to the township center meridian, with the main facade facing north. Members habitually faced Vestre Sogn—from which they came—Hawk Creek and points farther south as they entered and sat in church.

Even though in the mid 1880's no church creates the southern end of the meridian line now with Wang at the northern extreme, for over ten years a pair of congregations and cemeteries existed about seven miles south of Hawk Creek; one, Valle, the Ns "eastern sogn" belonged to the Yellow Medicine congregation to the west, and the other "Rock Valley", subscribed to the *Konferensen* synod. Thorstensen preached in Valle homes and landscape settings, while only a little over four miles away, Bergh made the rounds among the Rock Valley congregation also without a church. In 1890, as part of the new *Forenede* or United synod, these two historic congregations merge under the new heading, "Rock Valle". Church pamphlets discuss this union at some length, even providing the name of the farmer who promised to give land for the new cemetery and church, on the condition of acceptance of the merger. Nothing is reported about the fact that, as seen in figure 38, the site just happens to be positioned at a section cross, and more significantly on the meridian with Hawk Creek, Vestre Sogn, and Wang. Furthermore, it is Erikson, not Thorstensen that becomes the pastor of record for the new sizable unified congregation. At this time he also preaches at Hawk Creek and Wang, while still serving groups up near and including Saron, his parsonage some twenty-six miles as the crow flies northwest (over still wild roads).

The author spent several informative hours one morning on site with the present pastor at Rock Valle who today also serves Hawk Creek. The church seen in figure 39 can be immediately understood as not only larger to accommodate the merged congregation, but for its unique duality of steeples. At construction in 1891 shown on the right side of the illustration, the church had two separate entrances facing south. Complementary to the three churches to the north, these Rock Valle meridian members looked north as they entered and sat during services. The meaning of the unusual dual entrances can most readily be explained by the fact that during



ROCK VALLE (today)



GRAVE LISTS FROM CEMETERIES / CONGREGATIONS UNITED AT ROCK VALLE



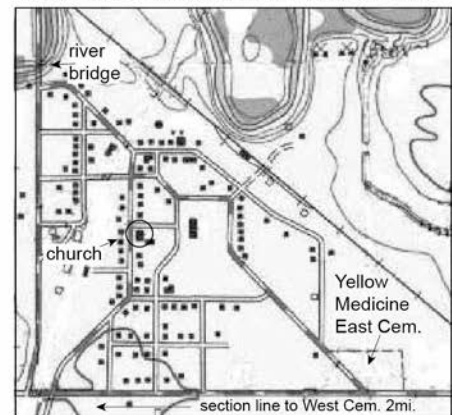
ENTRANCE SIGNS FOR WEST AND EAST YELLOW MEDICINE CEMETERIES



ROCK VALLE built 1891



YELLOW MEDICINE in HANLEY FALLS built 1898



HANLEY FALLS

Figure 39. Rock Valle and Yellow Medicine in Hanley Falls: later, larger, identical churches with “male” and “female” steeples and entrances, spatially opposed east and west of each other but with reverse north-south orientations; headstones opposed east – west with lists of burials at two earlier cemeteries unified at Rock Valle (lower left); matrix symbolism in formal location of Yellow Medicine in Hanley Falls.

these years, congregations in Norwegian churches (as well as other Christian groups in America and elsewhere) seated men separate on pews on the right side as one enters, from women on the left side of the nave—replicating the pattern in the old country. Patriarchal identities among

Norwegian farmers might have been expressed in the greater prominence of Rock Valle's east steeple in comparison to its west counterpart. To this day remnants of a very old *stue*/church spatial symbolism still exist (see again figure 14). When the author arrived at Hawk Creek for a Sunday service, accompanying informant friends said, somewhat jokingly, that men and women should sit on opposite sides of the church basement during a coffee hour held while waiting for the pastor to arrive after his sermon at Rock Valle.

An exterior "male/female" interpretation of the original two main entrances of Rock Valle, however, might not capture the primary expressive intent of the architecture. In the fusion of *stue* and church in Norway after the Reformation, East has replaced North as the most powerful spiritual direction, while North becomes "female" and South "male". But one clearly observes in these Norwegian immigrant churches that the principal building direction towards its alter appears to relate much more with complementary matrix symbolism of the landscape. So what happens to these traditional meanings of *stue* and church directions, primarily in terms of symbolism of interior ritual, as Minnesota Lutheran churches oriented cardinally in anything but traditional directions in the larger landscape? In Minnesota, did only the interior of the church maintain the traditional perpendicular oppositions between entrance and altar, and male and female? Given the lack of some medieval system of exterior orientation to features in the new landscape--as apparent in Norway--building orientation could be appropriated to express associations with other Norwegian groups.

Thus the two steeples and entrances at Rock Valle, much later remodeled into one main entrance, might be seen primarily for their expression of matrix position. The Rock Valle point could have been understood as one of the most important cross points in the Minnesota River concept. At this meridian only a mile or so from the river, the two west and east domains come together; one of the unified congregations belongs to the expansive Yellow Medicine history, while the other contains both "middle" or *Konferensen* meaning as well as Ns Vestre Sogn as the western component of Our Savior's. Directly across the east/west section line (now road) to the south of the large Rock Valle church lies its cemetery, see again figure 39. Prominently displayed at the entrance and spatially correct with respect to their original location in the landscape, stand a pair of stones listing those buried at the two old cemeteries, Valle and Rock Valley, used prior to the union.

About seven years after this church is built, in 1898, the congregation of (middle) Yellow Medicine constructs what appears to be an identical structure in Hanley Falls. The Rev. Thorstensen had retired four years earlier, so this probably can't be seen as a kind of compensation for losing his parish in the Rock Valle merger. Rather, there appears an architectural association between the two churches, now both *Forenede or* United, the one as the new central face of the historic Yellow Medicine congregation, and the other as the embodiment of the longitude where east met west. Appropriately, the latitude line of Rock Valle runs common with Bethlehem, Spring Creek (+Israels?), West Yellow Medicine/Stephanus, and St. Paul to the west, and to a new church to the east. The twin church in Hanley Falls lies less than a mile south of this line. As seen in the Hanley Falls photo and plan of figure 39, the village formally creates a not quite equilateral right triangle, with the historic section line between West and East Yellow Medicine cemeteries as its base; this line creates the junction point for the diagonal (hypotenuse) that expresses the azimuth of the railroad line. This diagonal forms the west side of the cemetery.

Hanley Falls School occupies the center of the diagonal. It faced due west, however, toward a one block east-west "Main Street". The large Yellow Medicine church built on the southeast corner at the termination of Main St. complements the diagonal center. The scale of the structure dwarfs surrounding residences. Unquestionably this historic congregation held a significant position in the growing village and surrounding landscape. Main St. might formally have represented a "homologue" (similar pattern at different scale) of the section line from West Yellow Medicine cemetery to East Yellow Medicine cemetery, as well as a direction west to the original congregation. The early landscape not only moves to the city, but links to the new formal element of railroad in the landscape.

But why was the structure located on the south corner, rather than north like Rock Valle (assuming that such an influential group would have had their choice of sites)? Unlike Rock Valle, Hanley Falls plays no part of any well formalized meridian, in spite of latter day appropriations of north-south lines by daughter churches. Does it follow the patterns among churches—Rock Valle, Wang, Vestre Sogn—on the eastern meridian where buildings oriented such that people entering and sitting faced other congregations that they historically interacted with? Did the entry of Hanley Falls parishioners toward the south, along with seated orientation,

facilitate associations with the section line to the south that defined West and East Yellow Medicine cemeteries?

One final element in the Hanley Falls plan deserves comment. If the diagonal doesn't either form a true equilateral triangle, or accurately parallel the railroad tracks, what created the angle? If the formal layout was integrally designed with the platting and new railroad line in 1884, then the East Cemetery could have preexisted, and provided the reason for this point of the diagonal? The Hanley Falls congregation, also attended to by Rev. Thorstensen, didn't organize until 1893 (dissolved in 1898 when they merged with the mother Yellow Medicine congregation and built the church in town). The Minnesota Cemetery Project provides no date for the founding of the East Cemetery, but in "Find a Grave" listing of burials one finds a baby boy interred in 1879, suggesting that this cemetery existed prior to becoming the formal East partner to West Yellow Medicine, and prior to the town being platted. When surveyors laid out the diagonal, therefore, its southeast point seems to have been located at the existing cemetery. This, however, still doesn't explain the actual azimuth of the diagonal.

The necessary northwest point might logically have been the place where people crossed the Yellow Medicine River. If so, then the meridian of the Hanley Falls triangle runs from the river crossing down to the West – East Yellow Medicine line. The corner position of the big church in the small village not only relates to the east-west landscape in its location on Main St. and steeple dualism, but its position on the north-south street in town expresses a scaled down version of the meridian from the Yellow Medicine River bridge. In 1898, did this congregational "map" reflect on the earliest days thirty years prior, where the cemetery and eventual church lay south of the congregation's namesake landscape feature, along which they worshiped in natural groves for a number of years? Compared to other railroad towns laid out fifteen years or more after the first cemeteries, e.g. Canby, Clarkfield, Hazel Run, and Sacred Heart, the unusually formal pattern in the small village of Hanley Falls may have said much about its relationship to the larger scale mother congregation of Yellow Medicine. Even though the big church wasn't yet built, nor the short-lived Hanley Falls congregation (same pastor) formed when Hanley Falls was platted in 1884, the people that designed this pattern most likely were members of the (*Mitre*) Yellow Medicine congregation. If so they could have understood the symbolic landscape symbolism of the West and East pair of cemeteries and their historical relationship to the Sognefjord-like Yellow Medicine River.

Balancing the greater Hawk Creek Township center line: a second eastern meridian

The pivotally united Rock Valle site locates in 1891, and in short order, 1892 and 1893 two additional congregations organized and sites positioned on the opposite township center meridian of the two eastern townships, Ericson and Sacred Heart (of the original greater Hawk Creek Township). Thus, in figure 38, while the earliest Ns and Hs sites aligned on the center meridian of greater Hawk Creek Township, ultimately center lines of the four revised conventional townships become defined by cemeteries and their churches, especially the pair of meridians equidistant from the original meridian concept. The two new cross points, one east of Rock Valle, and the other east of Vestre Sogn, serve also to finally integrate the early congregation of Rock Dell, the place people worshiped either in the grove outside or in Turi Rudi's large log house until they built their church in 1884.



Figure 40. Rock Dell cemetery and church at the base of second meridian alignment in east matrix area; congregants in pews face graves to east.

In 1875 two and one half acres of land in section 27 to the east of the present day Rock Dell cemetery and church had been purchased and a cemetery started by the congregation. Since the meetings at the Rudi place continued while the cemetery to the east served its purposes, the two church foci lay at a distance on each side of the township centers meridian (Ericson, Sacred Heart, and Swedes Forest). Eventually they chose, not surprisingly, to abandon the cemetery site and build on the hill just above the place where people had met for a dozen years or more, photo in figure 40. The cemetery portion of today's site lies to the east of the church, just as had the

earlier abandoned site. The church, however, located on the western half of the churchyard, curiously faces a grove of trees to that direction, essentially turning its back on those resting for eternity. Does it follow the pattern of entering and sitting facing some social group beyond the church walls, even though in previous examples this involves more distant “others”, not those in the graves to the east on the site?

Across the river north of Rock Dell, settled a group, many of whom had emigrated from the Numedal/Setesdal/Opdal area of Norway (the very traditional valley where the dwelling of figure 9 originally stood). When Richard Enestvedt told stories about Turi Rudi and the Rock Dell group south of the river, he also narrates the life of her brother Lars Rudi whose first log house still stands on the north side of the river (Turi married an unrelated man in Norway whose last name was also Rudi). The first religious meetings north of the river took place in Lars Rudi’s small log structure; Lars belonged to the pietistic Hauges movement but soon became part of the Rev. Bergh’s formation of Our Savior’s. Probably only coincidentally, Lars Rudi’s house sits very accurately on the township center cardinal line from Palmyra (it was his and Turi’s brother Tov who participated in the formation of Fort Ridgely/Palmyra).

For a number of years both sides of the river are Norwegian Synod, meeting in groves and homes, pastored by Bergh. In 1884 when people on the south side built their church, this logically would have been time to follow suit on the north. Yet it may have taken the union at Rock Valle, and new church there in 1891, some seven years later, to finally convince people to create a new daughter congregation from Our Savior’s, still Ns, with Bergh as pastor. Given the that the unified Rock Valle church had just lost its Ns pastor, Thorstensen replaced by Fk Eriksen, was this reason to finally culminate the large scale line of churches from the original West Yellow Medicine (Stephanus), now more accurately including St. Paul’s, Spring Creek, Bethlehem and Rock Valle? The new Opdal site does not seek a township center cross, but aligns accurately with Rock Valle to the west.

Opdal’s strongest social pull, however, may have been friends and relatives across the river in the Rock Dell congregation. For this reason, perhaps, Opdal sits about 200 yards just east of the township centers meridian associated with Rock Dell history. The dual directional meaning of the Opdal site, to both meridian and cardinal (east-west) directions appears to be uniquely expressed by the construction of *two* structures, the church proper and a chapel. Interpreting the north facing church facade from examples thus far, it might have been the desire



Figure 41. Opdal church and chapel: north and east facing facades may relate to the site's location at the intersection of two matrix patterns, a meridian with Rock Dell and Krogfus, and the line westward to five other churches.

for parishioners to enter and sit looking toward their brethren across the river and Rock Dell. So strong was the linkage with Rock Valle and points west as well, that a separate structure might have been necessary. One enters the chapel and sits facing west. This dual structure site is reminiscent of the old pattern on Norwegian farms with two principal dwelling structures, the *stue* and *loft*, with opposed entrance and ridge orientations (again figure 9). This tradition was particularly strong in Numedal or Setesdal origin of many settlers in this area, though the perpendicular pattern, as seen in figure 3 occurred prehistorically in other parts of Scandinavia.

In the same vein, the early Hauges influence in Lars Rudi and others from this insular region of Norway could have influenced the early pairing on the original greater Hawk Creek center meridian between Our Savior's Ns and Hoff Hs. This synod duo now reproduces itself in the organization of the northernmost church on the eastern township centers meridian, along with Opdal and Rock Dell. Its name "Opdahl" or "Krogfus", expresses the same geographical area in Norway as Opdal. The northern Opdahl is Hauges, not only pairing up with the south Ns Opdal, but the pair of pastors of the two original congregations, Bergh and T. J. Oppedahl (appropriately), serve the two new churches respectively on the eastern township centers meridian line. As discussed in a previous section, in 1892, the Hauges Hoff church is moved into

Sacred Heart just a few blocks from Our Savior. Bergh and Oppedahl pair up in both Sacred Heart and on the Opdahl-Opdal-Rock Dell meridian. The Opdahl churchyard sits right at the Ericson Township cross point, on the southwest corner. The modest Ericson town hall, shown in figure 42, sits opposite on the northwest corner.



Figure 42. Ericson Township Town Hall in northwest corner at the intersection of township center lines (Krogfus occupied the southwest corner). Town hall built in 1902.

Does this combination of structures at the cross point replicate the dual Opdal to the south? While the church no longer stands up north, the layout of the site and location of graves suggests it stood on the north half (of the southwest cross corner) and faced north just like Opdal. Did entering and sitting to the south pay this homage to original Hauges immigrants as part of the Opdal/Rock Dell community? The Ericson town hall emulates the Opdal chapel as well in its orientation. Running west, this line passes a mile north of Vestre Sogn, and accurately to Camp Release and the large Bergen congregation thirty-three miles distant. The Swedish Ebenezer congregation locates its site four miles east on this same line (illustrated in the summary diagram).

Thus one finds two meridians formally replacing the original greater Hawk Creek Township meridian. On the western side, perhaps most influenced by the union that took place to create the larger Rock Valle congregation, three of the four churches in the early 1890's define themselves as *Forenede* (United Synod). Only Vestre Sogn remains Norwegian Synod on the meridian, though Bergh no longer serves there. The Our Savior/Hauges congregations meet in their respective churches in the Sacred Heart village--conceptually still associated with the

original center perhaps--and as well in three churches on the eastern meridian, anchored to the south by the large and long-lived still rural congregation at Rock Dell.

Extension of the Hawk Creek-Rock Valle meridian south?

Three additional churches appear on the Hawk Creek-Rock Valle township centerline meridian, Echo in 1900, Granite Rock in 1894, and a German Lutheran congregation of unknown name (appears on 1900 plat map but not on USGS quad), figure 43. The congregation in the small railroad village of Echo, laid out in 1884 along with others already discussed—Clarksfield, Hazel Run, Hanley Falls—belongs to the United or *Forenede* (Fk) synod. Their pastor, E.M. Eriksen, serves no fewer than four churches on the meridian (including Wang, Hawk Creek, and Rock Valle). Granite Rock, also listed in Norlie (1918) along with Echo, follows suit in synod affiliation, but hires a different pastor. Thus with the exception of the German Lutheran congregation and the still Ns Vestre Sogn, five of the seven churches on the meridian are *Forenede*.

The large cemetery just north of Echo contains both German and Norwegian burials, perhaps indicating that early villagers chose its location rather than congregations. The 1900 Norwegian congregation built their church in town and not adjacent to the cemetery. German Lutherans, however, positioned theirs right at the township center cross point two miles south of Echo village (if in fact this was the primary German Lutheran church in the area). No known historic cemetery at this location shows up in any registers, suggesting that these folks may have made the trip up to the shared Echo cemetery for burials.

The Norwegian congregation “Granite Rock” organized in 1894, five years before platting of the village. In 1918 the Norlie survey reports the location of this church in the village, suggesting construction of a church after platting. The layout of village of Vesta, its cemetery and churches, may express the half mile shift east in surveyed townships that occurs in Redwood county, in comparison to Renville and Yellow Medicine layouts where most of the “Hawk Creek - Rock Valle” meridian runs. Figure 44 shows how surveyors laying out Vesta positioned its central meridian or “Broadway Street” exactly between the two township center meridians, the western from Renville and Yellow Medicine Counties up north, and the eastern running south in Redwood County. Appropriately, almost as a convention of the time, the town cemetery is

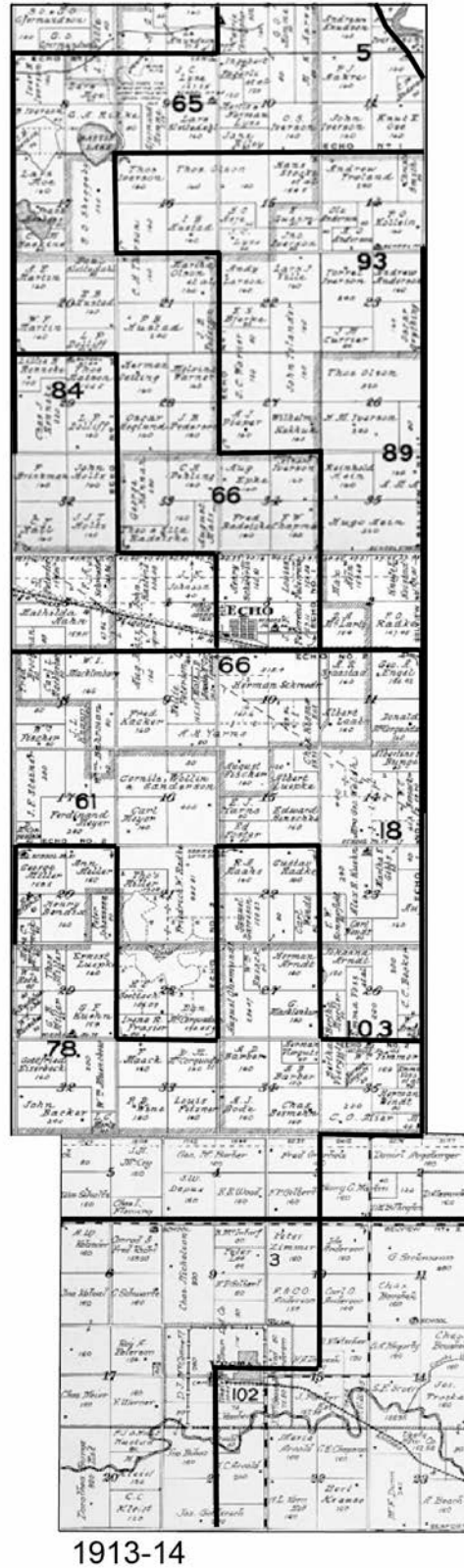
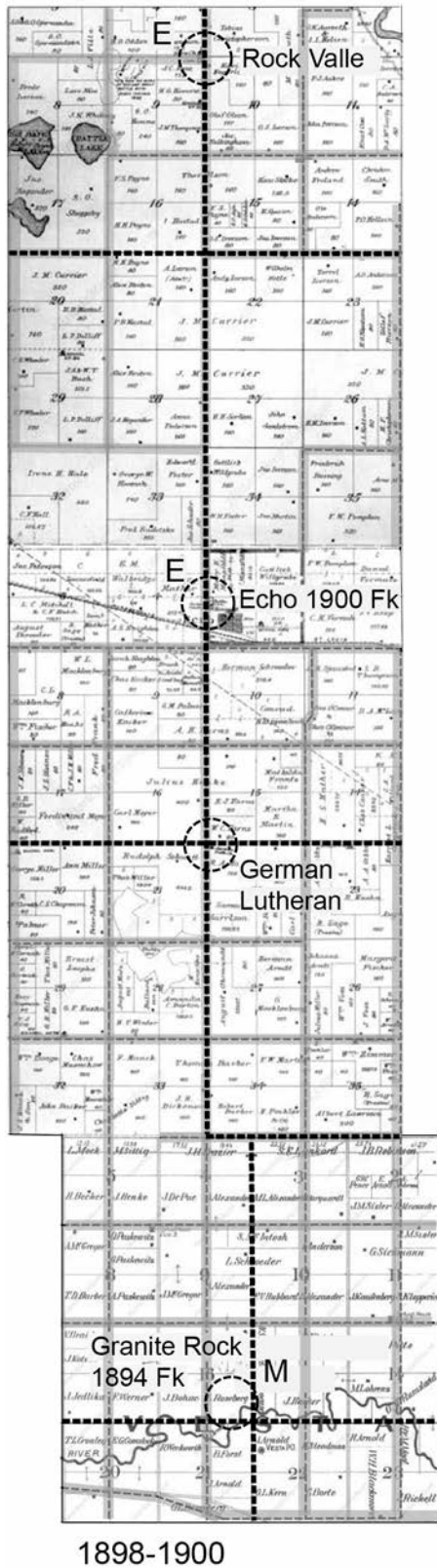


Figure 43. Meridian extension and comparison of roads

Left: Three churches farther south on Hawk Creek – Rock Valle township center line meridian: both Norwegian churches are Fk with Ericksen serving Echo along with three churches northon the meridian; background plat maps drawn in 1900; added grey lines highlight “road” designations at time of map; shows shift in township center line meridians in Redwood County.

Middle: Zigzag pattern of improved roads on 1913-1914 plat maps.

Right: Map of state highways in 1919; added dotted line area shows lack of highway along the Hawk Creek – Rock Valle meridian.

positioned on a cross point on the eastern township center meridian. It lies one half mile east of the meridian line of five cemeteries up north.

Vesta Township organized in 1880 four years before the Norwegian congregation and nineteen years before the town was platted. Thus the Vesta Cemetery may have been established on its township center line some years before congregations organized (at least those of the Norwegians). The present cemetery only dates to 1904, and is predominantly German, not unlike that at Echo. The actual survey center point of Vesta Township lies close to the river, one mile south of the cemetery. By the time of village platting, several congregations appear to be organized. But where did they bury their deceased? While the three churches shown on Broadway Street in the USGS quad map of figure 44 are not presently identified or dated, including that in the photo accompanying the map, all three seem to be positioned similarly on this main axis (the only active church in Vesta is a modern Lutheran structure on the east meridian, though the parsonage lies at the top of Broadway Street). The spatial locations of three probable Lutheran churches, German and Norwegian, on Broadway as meridian appear to fuse Vesta's west and east meridians; Broadway is equidistant between the two. These three churches all faced west on the same side of the street. While this common orientation may be adherence to the "universal" direction of Christian churches, much more local traditions alternatively appear to ask *who* the parishioners looked at when they entered and sat during services. If the church structures were built after the Vesta Cemetery, both only a few years after platting, were parishioners facing and thinking of their departed family and friends in the Vesta Cemetery on the eastern meridian?

Although farmers of the Vesta area were primarily German, the location of a Norwegian congregation here could have had associations with countrymen to the west, in addition to the north. About twenty years prior to the Granite Rock group in 1894, Norwegians twenty-nine miles to the west created the church of Hemnes (see again figure 33); 1904 Vesta Cemetery sits on this same section line. The distance from Granite Rock to Wang at the north end of the Rock Valle meridian is twenty-five miles, though with five cemeteries/churches in between, as distinct to none out west to Hemnes. Looking more closely at the pastor involved, the record shows that the Rev. E. M. Erikson served for one year in 1876 at Hemnes, on the cardinal west from Vesta, possibly creating an association between Hemnes and the "prime" meridian on which Erikson eventually preached to multiple congregations. The question remains as where Granite Rock

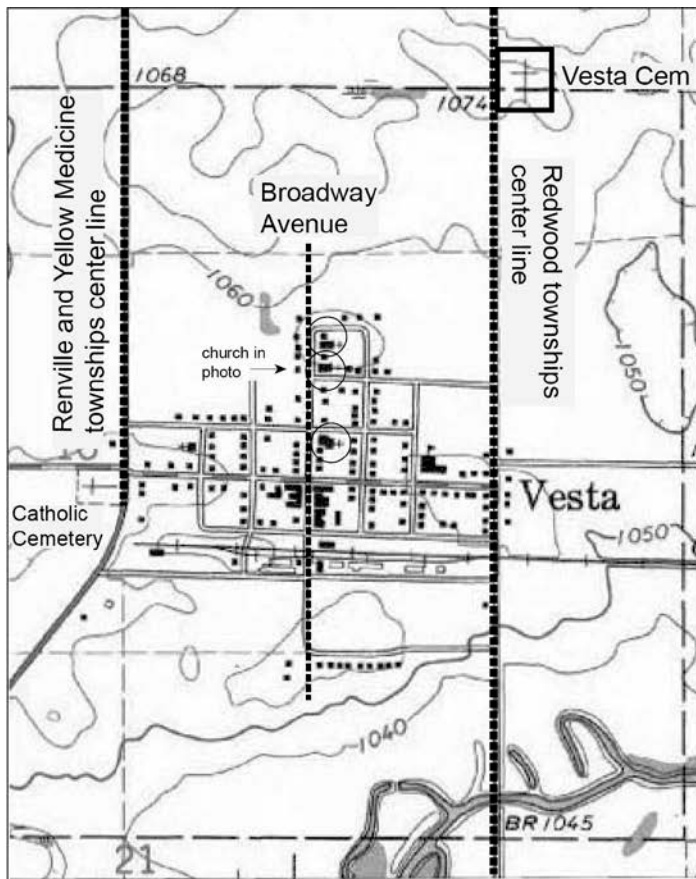


Figure 44. Formal positioning of Lutheran churches along Broadway Avenue in Vesta and relation of town meridian street to township center line meridians from Renville and Yellow Medicine Counties (west), and from Redwood County (east).

congregation buried their deceased for as much as ten years before the town cemetery was established?

The base maps of figure 43 reproduce plats at later dates than previous illustrations in this volume. Returning to Hildegard Johnson's work on the meaning of section structure in the landscape, very much aware of the period of "wild roads", she flatly says that "the grid pattern seen from the air emerged in the twentieth century in the more level regions of the Upper Midwest by the grace of the section roads" (1974:18). Yet the presence of these simple section road lines, as previously mentioned, appear on the first township plat maps in 1880 after the initial subdivision of townships about ten years earlier.

In the early stage of the present research, after mapping over a thousand mostly Scandinavian rural sites in Minnesota on a digital grid of USGS quads, the author mistakenly assumed that section roads came very early on. If so, it followed, the numerous groups of formally aligned churches revealed in the initial data base might well have had special names for connecting roads, particularly along shorter stretches of about ten miles or less. Toward this end, several presently serving township officers in a number of different counties (not including those in the present focus area) were contacted by e-mail and phone. Not only could no one find any township record of such road names, but virtually no records existed of road building or maintenance during the latter part of the 1800's and well into the twentieth century (one reason perhaps why Johnson provides no specific dates for the phenomenon). Today in Minnesota, townships have laws by which their section roads can be recorded as quasi-governmental infrastructure—but also can be abandoned after six years of non-use (see *Recording Town Roads* 2001). With enough time, one might be able to research county archives to determine the date(s) at which Minnesota Townships began to keep good records of the roads they managed, but for present purposes this likely didn't happen until the first decades of the twentieth century.

The flip side of building and maintaining these roads is the question of when farmers tended to max out plowed acreage of their fields, clearly increasing the need for roads on their edges and a better means of getting crops to market. From the 1870's to 1890's wheat provided the most profitable crop in flatter, western and southwestern counties. Renville and Yellow Medicine might have seen similar changes that occurred up in Otter Tail, where in 1870, harvests produced 8,406 bushels, mushrooming to 2,623,538 twenty years later in 1890 (Jarchow 1948).

While declining values and production costs eventually caused farmers to diversify, particularly with dairy farming, this was more the case in central and southeastern parts of the state.

Willa Cather was nine years old when she moved to Nebraska in 1883, and most likely traveled primarily wild roads in the late 80's and early 90's when continuing to grow up, in spite of settlers making every effort to expand their cheap or free land to take advantage of the wheat boom. Nevertheless, back in southwestern Minnesota, when counties and their agents draw up first plat maps of their townships, again they do make a distinction to section lines with roads, a majority, and those without. These symbols, part of commercially funded atlases with no index or map key as to what road symbols mean, might actually have indicated farms which had broken ground up to their property lines--not necessarily a costly network at the time of real roads built and maintained by townships. Even after having plowed to property lines, the landscape still could have been perceived as continuous prairie with few straight roads, though with new plants. During this period before fencing, farmers might well have still allowed neighbors, and probably fellow church members, to drive their wagons across the established wild roads on their properties. After all, even when section roads do develop extensively, they are not permanently owned county property, but exist for the period that farmers actively use them.

Returning to figure 43, the third plat map of 1913-14, after 1880 and 1900 issues, for the first time shows *two* kinds of roads, though again without a key explaining the graphic symbols. These unusually laid out roads appear to be illustrated as more permanently built and maintained in some way. Yet they are quite unlike modern paved county roads that provide higher speed travel usually along longer, straighter distances of section lines. Nor are they similar to the first state roads, seen in the 1919 smaller scale map of figure 43, which do exactly this. The 1913-14 roads, on closer examination do seem to have a rationale. They may have provided still largely wagon speed travel possibly replacing the use of wild roads, and perhaps even their general directional patterns. If one follows the zigs and zags, these appear to be part of routes moving produce to railheads and growing commercial foci. Their scale, however, is clearly a composition of section roads. The reader will recall that the first mention of road building in Wang Township comes in 1919, farthest north on the Hawk Creek-Rock Valle meridian.

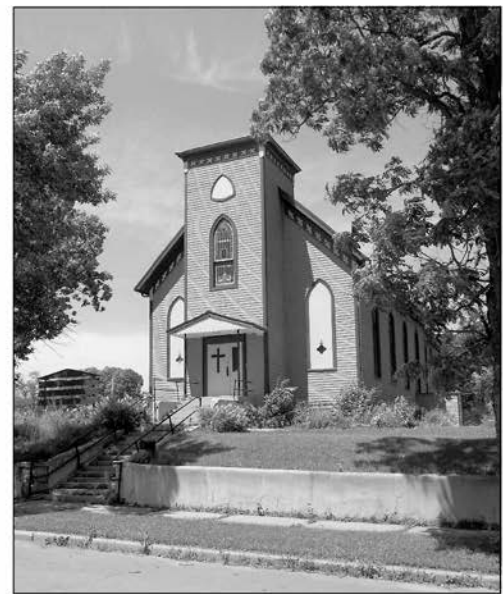
As incomplete as this "archaeology" of first formal road artifacts in the prairie landscape remains, it seems reasonable to assume that at the time most if not all the churches on the Hawk

Creek-Rock Valle meridian are positioned, no well-maintained gravel section road stretches along the township center line from Granite Rock to Wang. Even when map makers draw road symbols along section lines in the 1880, 1900, *and* 1914 maps, one has little sense of any such perceptual reality in the landscape. Not only do breaks occur south of Hawk Creek, and of course across the Minnesota River, but whatever the 1914 zigzagging roads actually were, they clearly do not emphasize any dominant north-south meridian along township center lines. Not until the state begins building roads for a motorizing landscape in 1919, does one see a north-south highway from Vesta up to the Minnesota River.

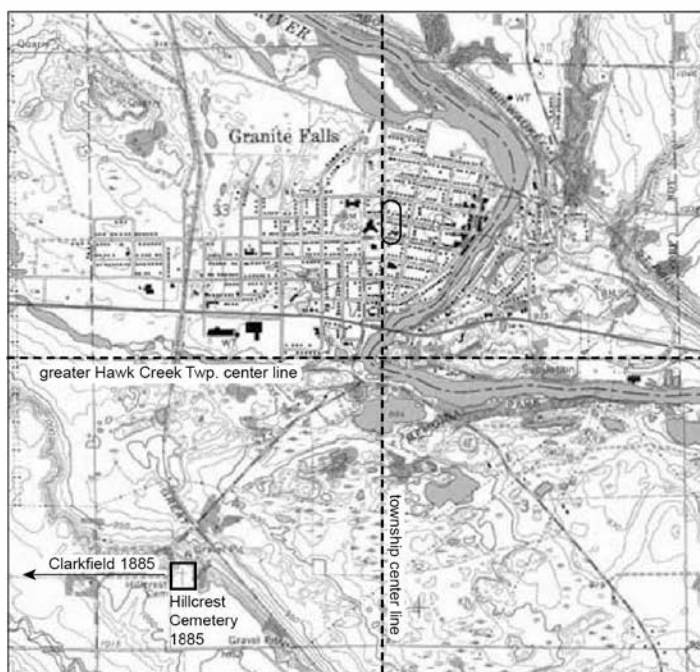
The Granite Falls meridian: a final center of centers?

The question was posed earlier whether the first pastors Johnson and Bergh, as well as laymen, understood Granite Falls to be something of a “center” location to the matrix concept. In terms of congregations, only several years after a small population settles near the falls in the late 60’s and early 70’s does the first Norwegian church organize in 1876. Even in 1882 when they build their church in the growing but still very small town, this group by no means constitutes the largest, most central congregation in any respect. The landscape churches of Bergen, Yellow Medicine, and soon to be unified Rock Valle boast greater memberships. In fact from 1876-1881, it is Thorstensen from Bergen and Yellow Medicine (and others) who visits the new “urban” church of Granite Falls. When he retires from Bergen in 1881, the Rev. O. O. Løkensgaard serves both Bergen and Granite Falls. Shortly after this change a still Ns Granite Falls acquires property and builds a church on the northern of the two sites indicated in figure 45.

Surveyors platting the town of Granite Falls in 1872 made a seemingly unusual decision to adopt two slightly differently oriented grids. The one on the east reflects earliest settlement along the river and falls, where the commercial center developed. This beautiful setting today contains amenities both natural and cultural along the river, with a historic pedestrian bridge to the smaller part of town on the east side. Pelicans picturesquely sit in the spray of the falls, actually waiting for prey, much to the bane of duck hunters. The westernmost part of the main town, laid out in 1878 as the population grew, orients accurately to cardinal directions. The “Pillsbury Addition” was surveyed four years before construction of the first Granite Falls Lutheran church, 1882, though the congregation organized two years earlier than the addition.



North Church 1882 (photo by author)



South Church 1894



Granite Falls Lutheran (replaced South Church)

Figure 45. Location of split Granite Falls congregation churches on township center line meridian; dual steeple architecture of South Church emulates that at Rock Valle built three years earlier (both churches orient south); South Church replaced by modern structure on same site and North Church presently privately owned.

The dividing line between the two west and east grids that positions the first church is the center line for townships in Yellow Medicine County--Minnesota Falls, Wood Lake, and Posen--

south of the Minnesota River. In spite of the lack of township roads in the larger landscape at this time, the meridian line joining the two grids in Granite Falls, probably built as a road soon after layout in 1878, created a formal central axis for the town. The location of a Norwegian church on a township center line by now is predictable. Significant here, however, is that in town meridian symbolism even more unlikely expressed a link between congregation and township organization. Most people going to church in Granite Falls were not farmers, nor does any apparent township organization underlie the formation and incorporation of Granite Falls as an organized town. Granite Falls is also the Yellow Medicine county seat obviating as well the need for organized rural township function. Given the probability that Granite Falls Norwegians, both pastors and parishioners, undoubtedly knew congregation members and their matrix contexts in the greater formalized landscape, the creation of a Granite Falls “mini-meridian” might be seen as a not unrelated evolution of the “system”.

In addition to its position on a north-south township center line, the Granite Falls meridian shares more specific histories with the Rock Valle-Hawk Creek vertical just east across the river. In the evolution of the Minnesota River matrix, in spite of impressionable discursive literature on conflicts of synod doctrine, very few congregation divisions occur for reasons other than population growth and travel distances. The departure of Valdres folk from Ns Vestre Sogn in 1885 to create Wang is the only case thus far discussed. In that year, both Vestre Sogn and Granite Falls nominally follow Norwegian Synod doctrine. During 1885-1890, both had become Anti-Missouri, and had the same pastor from 1889-90, O. O. Løkengaard (also serving the large Bergen congregation). In 1890, most of the Norwegian Lutheran churches in the matix unite in the *Forenede* (Fk) synod. Wang and Løkengaard follow suit without any new conflict in this Valdres group that had left Vestre Sogn five years earlier. Granite Falls, however, never really developed clear synod definition after the original Ns began to evolve, though ultimately began to feel that the popular United Lutheran synod was too liberal. After three years of some internal turmoil, those professing the old “high” church (Ns), no small minority, voted to leave the congregation (greater complications here involve the sharing of pastors with Bergen which had become solidly Fk).

The existing church building, reflecting the growing adherence to the United Synod, soon became exclusively used by that (Fk) congregation and Løkensgaard, in spite of the split congregations having originally decided to alternate their services in the structure. In 1894, the

Ns group reorganizes effectively enough to build its own church. Not unsurprisingly they locate in the same position on the meridian, one adjacent block south. This prominent pair of Norwegian Lutheran Churches less formally is called “North Church” (original structure or United Lutheran) and “South Church” (First Lutheran). This strong formal duality repeats spatial patterns at multiple places in the New Norwegian landscape. Granite Falls, however, is the natural landscape focus and growing commercial center of the matrix. Typically Norwegian, perhaps, no single congregation, nor discursive piece of architecture, could for long stand alone on a center line. Just as in the façade of the 1930’s city hall in Oslo, with its absolute dualism of towers, the matrix center in Granite Falls may have also been more comfortably appreciated as a pair.

Again, the Granite Falls mini-meridian may have been influenced as well by the Vestre Sogn/Wang split seven years earlier. Løkensgaard, serving at both Wang and Granite Falls during the pivotal years of the United Synod movement could have played some role in the later split. After the event, a second pastor, the Rev. G. T. Lee ministers (1894-96) to both Vestre Sogn and the new Norwegian Synod congregation in Granite Falls. Not only does one find two pairs of pastors serving two pairs of congregations on the two meridians on each side of the river (though not at the same time), but each synod is also formally expressed, i.e. Ns to the south (Vestre Sogn and the South Church in Granite Falls), and Fk to the north (Wang and the North Church in Granite Falls).

The history of Granite Falls, as the reader will recall, goes beyond these later commonalities between the two meridians. The early organization of Hawk Creek congregation was called “Granite Falls” and pamphlet literature on the eventual congregations across the river speaks of relations to the Hawk Creek-Rock Valle pair (eastern meridian). The shorter Granite Falls meridian could have been known to intersect with the earlier township center line of the greater Hawk Creek Township (later with the Hawk Creek churchyard on it). This intersection point at the prominent bend in the Minnesota River (figure 28) could have been something of a natural counterpoint, the ultimate duality perhaps, with the architectural pair of churches in Granite Falls proper to the north on the meridian. The 1885 creation of a cemetery for the Norwegian Granite Falls congregation, south of the east-west Hawk Creek line, again figure 45, appears not to have been formally integrated with the matrix focus at Granite Falls. Located on higher ground above the flood plain, “Hillcrest” cemetery doesn’t sit on any section line, but

does align at the same latitude with the Norwegian cemetery at Clarksfield 11.8 miles west. The two cemeteries were positioned within a year or two of each other.

Architectural features of the South Church of 1894, photo in figure 45, suggest formal similarities with the two somewhat larger buildings of Yellow Medicine in Hanley Falls (1898) and Rock Valle (1891). While the South Church echoes the duality of steeples at the other two sites, including a greater prominence of the male or eastern side (it faced south like Rock Valle); the “female” steeple is noticeable smaller and shorter in comparison. Recalling, however, that this duality might also be interpreted as expressing social evolution of the large scale matrix, the more prominent eastern steeple at the South Church makes sense in its history with the Hawk Creek/Rock Valle meridian on the other side of the river.

The two Granite Falls Norwegian churches eventually lose their synod distinctions, and for this and reasons of aging church structures, the congregations unite again in the 1950’s and build today’s clearly largest and most architecturally impressive Norwegian Lutheran church in the original matrix, figure 45. While the handsome stone building orients its ridge east and west, on the same South Church site, its less prominent main entrance at the bell tower actually faces west. Even today, this clearly most discursive “central” structure still lies on the township center meridian and expresses the site’s east-west landscape affiliation with its nave orientation. Before sitting in the congregation facing east and the congregations of the Hawk Creek – Rock Valle meridian, one first turns to the north after entering, perhaps a gesture to the social history with the North Church still a block away on the meridian. Most likely, many of these meanings are no longer sensed except by a few older congregants.

Metrics of the Minnesota River Matrix

Now that the components of aligned Norwegian cemeteries and churches have been discussed as to dates, congregational or synod membership, traveling pastors and related formal design logic, one can summarize factually defined characteristics. Pastoral services may be the best evidence of spatial connections among and between components, figure 46, tying together not just common synod congregations but all Norwegian synods over a period of about thirty years, from roughly 1870 to 1900. The issue of whether pastors or church councils had greater influence in the design of the matrix will be discussed in the concluding section; pastoral links *per se*,

however, clearly indicate social spatial associations created by *both* pastors and the councils that hired them.

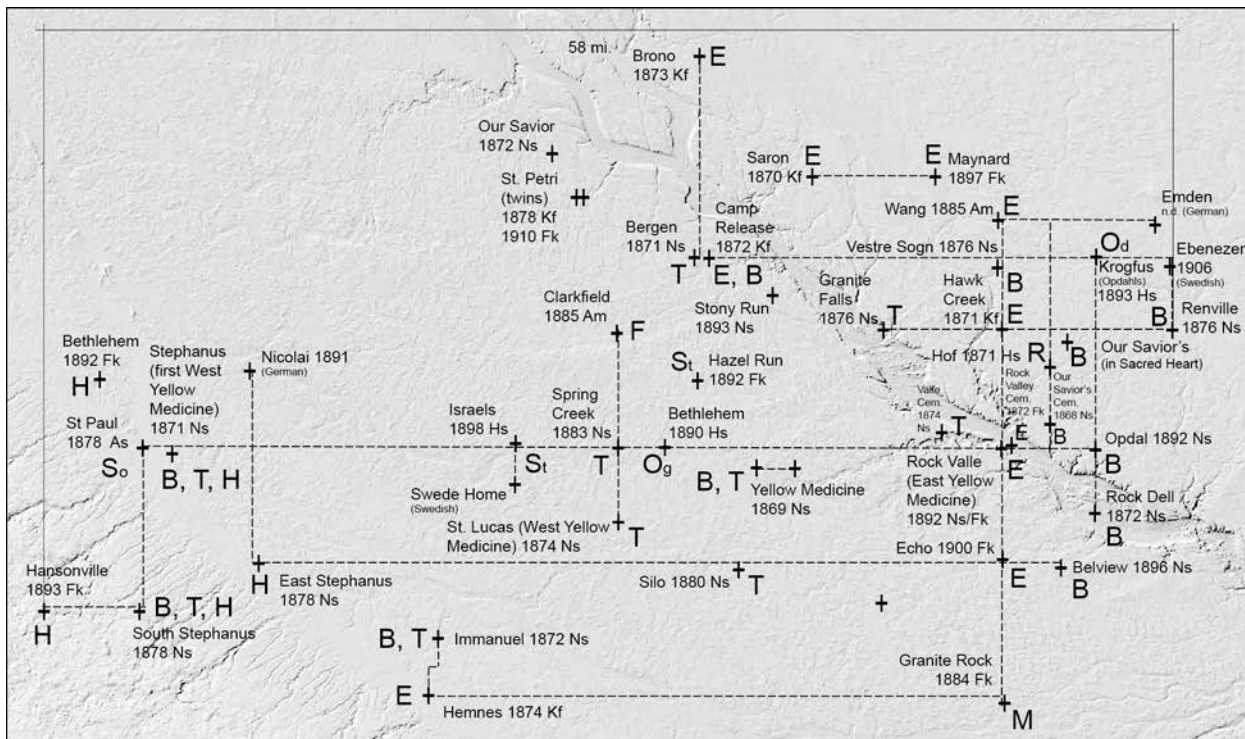


Figure 46.. Common pastor associations in the evolved Minnesota River Matrix: **B** = Bergh, **T** = Thorstensen, **E** = Eriksen, **H** = Hoel, **S_o** = Solem, **S_t** = Strand, **O_g** = Oppegard, **F** = Fjellstad, **M** = Mortensen, **O_d** = Oppedahl, **R** = Rustad.

The Norwegian exclusivity of this matrix area of still mostly wild prairie land is further defined in figure 47; compared to forty-one rural Norwegian sites, one finds a much small number of other ethnicities largely on the periphery, i.e. twelve German Lutheran sites (mostly in the northeast), one Catholic, one Methodist and one non-denominational. Five Swedish churches, and one Finnish spatially integrate better into the “system”. Early in this research data collection of all rural sites in Minnesota revealed many apparent clusters of Norwegian churches, with the Minnesota River matrix being one of the most extensive and formally promising. While “border” relationships between clusters in Minnesota lie beyond the scope of the present project, in the Minnesota River, for example, some border ambiguity appears in the five sites north of the Bergen-Camp Release pair. Even though E. M. Erikson, the pastor of several churches on the Hawk Creek/Rock Valle meridian, resides in his parsonage near his Saron church, this congregation itself may have been historically integrated with churches in the vicinity, e.g. with the large congregation, Immanuel, located just off the matrix to the north. The same is true for

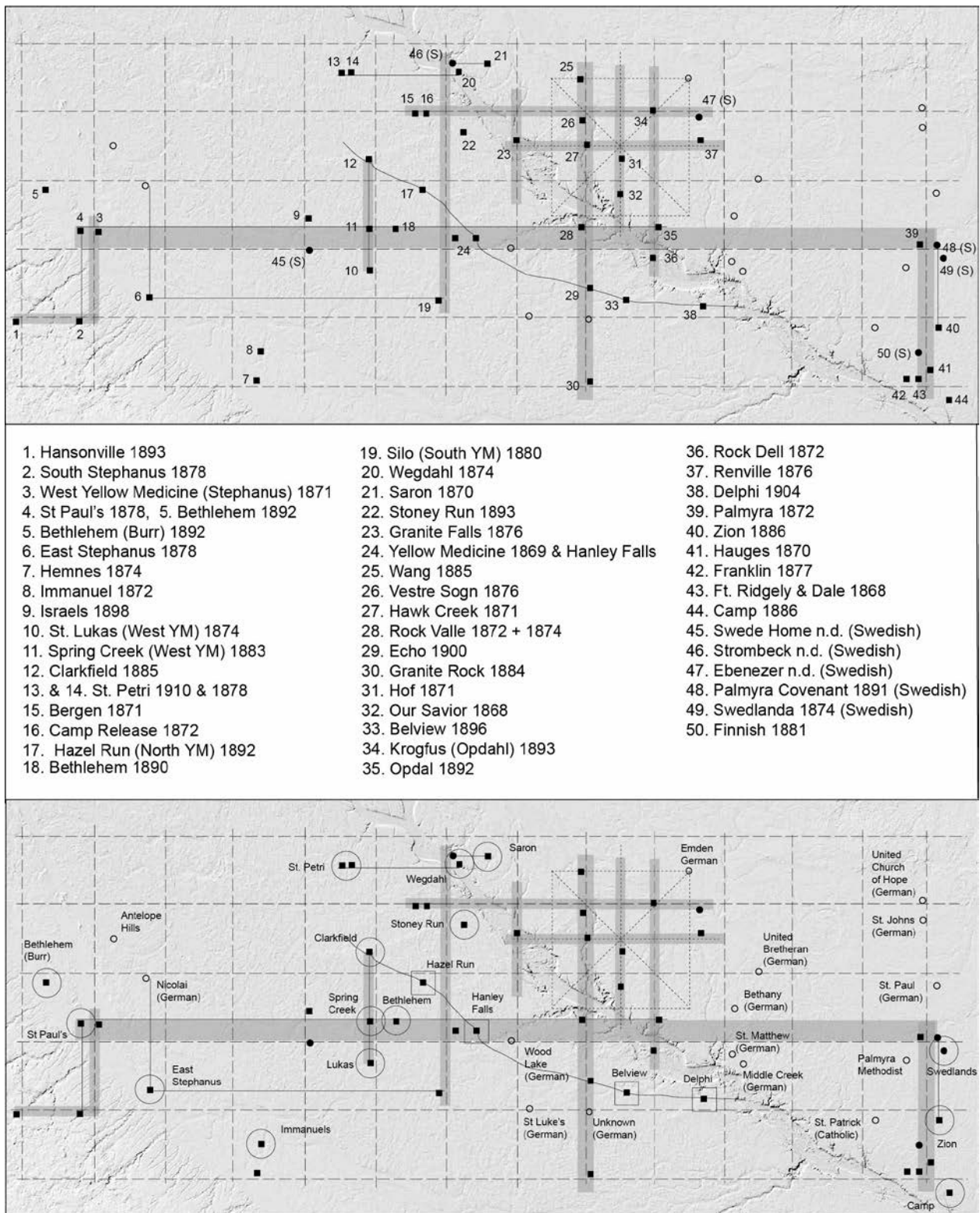


Figure 47. Minnesota River Matrix in context with township center lines: (above) locations of forty-four Norwegian Lutheran churches, six other Scandinavian churches, fourteen German Lutheran churches, and three others; solid lines indicate possible intentional alignments not on township center lines: (below) circled churches not on township center lines, including alignments parallel to township center lines and four unaligned sites; churches with squares indicate locations on railroad stops.

the excellent pair example of St. Petri. Future mapping of other clusters of churches in Minnesota may produce a better understanding of possible border dynamics.

Alignment with township center lines clearly lies at the heart of analysis of the early Norwegian landscape, especially in the Minnesota River Matrix. The maps of figure 47 show the relationship of church sites to township center lines either as meridians (longitudes), or “cardinals” (latitudes). All forty-one Norwegian cemetery/churches locate on one section line or another at the edge of future agricultural fields, with the exception of the first West Yellow Medicine or Stephanus. Not included are three sites in small railroad originated villages (Hazel Run, Belview and Delphi), plus five Swedish and one Finnish. Of the 41, sixty-three percent (63%), or 26 are located “on” township center lines, i.e. that the churchyard lies less than one half section (mile) distance from the survey center line. Since four of the six Swedish and Finnish sites also fall within this measure, one can consider a total number of Scandinavian churches of 47, of which 30 are aligned, or sixty-four percent (64%). Four of the German Lutheran churches also locate on township center lines.

This majority number, however, may not tell the whole story. One finds six sites that fall more than one-half mile away from township center lines but align with other sites on section lines themselves parallel to and possibly formally associated with adjacent township center lines. To the west of the matrix is the St. Paul – South Stephanus meridian, figure 34, and to the east the Palmyra Covenant (Swedish)-Zion meridian, figure 23. Also following this pattern is the meridian trio of St. Lukas, Spring Creek, and Clarkfield, figure 36. Bethlehem, just to the east of Spring Creek lies on the long east-west parallel line of six churches. A two-mile wide path is drawn in figure 47 with this long line as northernmost edge and the early Palmyra township center line as most southern. The all-important Yellow Medicine pair of cemeteries (and first church) rest on the section line centered between the two. If one now includes these six sites as having been formally located in association with township center lines, even though their parallel line lies farther away than the one-half mile, and including the other Scandinavian churches, the total is 36 of 47, or seventy-seven percent (77%). If one excuses the five churches on the border to the north, the ratio becomes 35 of 42 or eighty-three percent (83%). The matrix area is 42x90 miles, within which (6x6 mile) township center lines comprise about 15% of all possible section lines, just about the probabilistic inverse of what actually occurs (63%-83%). Did only four churches *not* integrate with the township center matrix: Bethlehem (1892 in Burr), East

Stephanus and Immanuels out west, and later Stoney Run (1893), part of the Bergen – Granite Falls pastor circuit?

How many church sites in the matrix located on cross section points, *a la* Cather's poetic rendering of the suicide grave? Using a somewhat arbitrary measure of being within a perceptual range of about 400 yards, of the 41 Norwegian sites, a little over half, 21, occupy cross points. Two of the six other Scandinavian sites follow suit. These numbers suggest a positive preference, but less so than that for township center lines. Curiously enough, with all of the churches aligning with township center lines, only five sit closer than 400 yards to township center points (Hansonville, Opdahl or Krogfus, Palmyra, Central Hauges, and Ft. Ridgely & Dale).

One can also list the orientations of the 22 still standing church structures, of the 44 Norwegian congregations (now including the three railroad related sites). Unlike regions in Norway such as Sognefjord and Valdres where an undiagnosed "systematic", off cardinal orientation has existed since the Middle Ages, the new Norwegian landscape congregations clearly decide on their own--regardless of synod or universal Christian tradition--where to orient or align architectural entrances, naves and altars. Of the 22: 6 face East, 6 West, 7 South, and 3 enter from the North. All align with cardinal east-west or meridian north-south axes; none sit off kilter in relation to the section lines on which they sit.

Considering the 46 Scandinavian sites, shaded meridians and cardinals of figure 47 show total numbers of sites on particular township center lines. The two section wide path from Palmyra 72 miles west to West Yellow Medicine (Stephanus) has 11, with the original Yellow Medicine, again, in the middle of the two-mile wide swath. Hawk Creek/Rock Valle counts as the strongest meridian with its 6 congregations on the line. To the east, however, if one includes the sites of the parallel adjacent to the Palmyra/Ft. Ridgely meridian, the total number of associated churches is 7. One foursome may have been understood running from Bergen in the west over to the Swedish Ebenezer in the east. Just below it, and also east-west runs the threesome from Granite Falls (the first "South" church sits less than a half mile from the greater Hawk Creek township center line) over to Renville. The Our Savior's meridian from Rock Dell to Opdahl (Krogfus) offers an apparent threesome as well, as does the quite accurate but adjacent parallel meridian of St. Lukas/Spring Creek/Clarkfield.

Additionally, one can include five pairs of congregations, which via their relationships to township center lines, also spatially integrate with the matrix. Farthest west are Hansenville-South Stephanus and St. Paul's-South Stephanus. In the Yellow Medicine "*sogn*", the original Yellow Medicine later forms a meridian pair with Silo (South Yellow Medicine). While the Swedish site of Strombeck lies on this line when extended north, its inclusion seems somewhat unlikely, even though this is the central north-south axis of the most important congregation on the west side of the Minnesota River. On the other side of the river the original Our Savior-Hoff cemeteries/church certainly paired up on the original greater Hawk Creek Township center line. Farthest east, Franklin's position links to Ft. Ridgely & Dale.

Factually, one hopes to have clearly shown that the locations and church orientations of the overwhelming majority of these Norwegian religious sites were designed as part of a cultural landscape at a scale of some or most of the Minnesota River matrix area. Furthermore, it seems most reasonable that these geometric patterns were laid out on an essentially still "wild" prairie landscape, one mostly without straight section roads, or other non-religious defining cultural artifacts.

INTERPRETING THE MINNESOTA RIVER MATRIX

Anthropologically, the "discovery" of these symbolic patterns that created the New Norwegian Landscape is akin to realizing that a literate, larger scaled, historical society at the cusp of the modern era also uses forms of expression typical of traditional, more organized but still essentially pre-literate societies. In Scandinavia, a distinction is made between anthropologists who research exotic, often primitive societies elsewhere in the world, and ethnographers interested in historical or contemporary groups within their own cultures. Curiously, however, this distinction doesn't hold for archaeologists who examine cultural remains largely without having to so define themselves in part by kinds and scale of cultural processes in human organization. In the present case, why haven't historical archaeologists been interested in the locations and church orientations created by early Norwegians in Minnesota? Is it simply because ethnographically orientated scholars pay most attention to more modern cultural processes, and in particular media that influence social organization, while more artifact and site oriented archaeologists largely relinquish cemetery data to family tree searchers--implicitly

assuming that location on a Midwest grid followed obvious transportation functions of section roads?

Furthermore, the broader anthropological record of investigating the dynamics between less than literate, ritually based organization and usually intrusive literate, historical cultures have often focused on serious resulting conflict, whether dramatic or insidious. Even where these two “kinds” of culture become more syncretic, research often remains problematic because of the inability to adequately evaluate different expressive processes used by actors in the same society. The present case of the Norwegian settlers, however, may be quite unique, in that the intrusive side of the equation began over a thousand years ago as literate, nationalizing Christians sought to layer a new kind of organization on a much older Norwegian cultural landscape.

“Discursive” and “non-discursive” processes in late nineteenth century Norway

A few hundred years before the first Christian church was positioned in the Scandinavian landscape, one finds clear evidence of symbolic “cross” concepts that informed grave and dwelling orientations, brooch design, and concepts of mythic or cosmic space as eventually recorded in the Icelandic sagas. Monumental mounds, not always with burials, and large monolithic ship settings counted as the largest cultural artifacts in an already ancient natural landscape. Related, and perhaps most socially significant ritual took place primarily in the “*fri*” or outside; no temples or church-like structures existed for inside services. Much smaller scale ritual, ultimately linked as well to features in the landscape, took place in the longhouses with their conventions of ridge, entrance and hearth (vertical) orientations. A symbolic opposition existed between family dwelling and community natural site, just as elaborate ship burials of an important chieftain subordinated expression of wealth with massive natural looking monumental mounds. Large mounds and ship settings may well have served as “cross” points or thresholds for journeys to Valhalla. One can only speculate at present, however, whether or not they participated in some large scale cross “system” integrating regions of Scandinavia. It is not impossible. Clearer evidence exists in the symbolic association of pre-historical cross form with a large circular ring mound in the “Trelleborgs” of Denmark and Southern Sweden, right at the time when people are choosing between Viking and Christian belief. Yet linkage between the cross form, its orientation and site location in the larger landscape also remains to be better understood.

When the first churches in Norway are sited and built in the early Middle Ages, in spite of the nightly efforts of the little people or *hulderfolk* to tear them down, they tend to be more ship-like, as seen in stave church imagery. Socially these first churches were more discursive representations of Christianity built by larger farmers, and not primarily places of community worship *per se*. Nevertheless a clear cross system with its characteristic off-cardinal cant informs orientations of the churches that become “parish” foci during the later Middle Ages. Like prehistoric graves and dwellings—and perhaps even mound groups and ship settings—again one finds evidence of some sort of larger scale concept of “center” or “cross”. Indications also exist in some Middle Ages churches that beyond their east-west offset orientation they symbolically function as cross thresholds between poles of the most powerful Scandinavian meridian direction, North-South. One even finds the subtle subordination of the stone church at Alstahaug to the large prehistoric memorial mound immediately to the north—the reason for the churches’ landscape location. Yet at more regionally prominent stone churches such as these the most important religious acts might well have been those inside the structure, relating to the discourse of the bible and doctrine as interpreted by priests and others of stature. Descriptions of practices of these parishioners on the mound just outside to the north tend not find their way into church records. The primary entrances, again, run from south by the graveyard, crossing the nave to a small door opening to the north.

Quite possibly some number of Minnesota settlers from Norway had actually lived in Middle Ages *stues* or dwellings in very traditional fjords and valleys such as Setesdal. While the early hearths of these structures had for a century or more been replaced by a standing iron stove in a corner of the principal room, much of the folklore collected around the time of emigration clearly reveals still active beliefs in “center” or “cross”, complete with an *axis mundi*, particularly as a dual concept of vertical and North-South meridian. These concepts help structure non-Christian rituals still practiced at the time on the farm, e.g. when the straw on which the deceased was washed in the *stue* and carried north to be burned on a prehistoric mound, sometimes supporting the farm tree. Cross-roads and other folk beliefs still must be respected as the body travels to the churchyard for burial, perhaps not being carried through the gate of the yard, but lifted over the wall to avoid a symbolically illogical threshold effect. Some folk artifacts used in emigrant dwellings in Norway, and many tarred cross marks on older log outbuildings clearly reminded folks of the ancient power in these symbols—though most new

dwelling, particularly in towns, had become externally stylistic (discursive) and had lost the traditional seven hundred year ritual layout of plan.

Like the Viking ship, prehistoric longhouse, and the early Christian churches, farm dwellings even after the Middle Ages continue to be associated with the authority of master of the farm. Not dissimilar to prehistoric social organization, in all likelihood, ritually practiced cross symbolism provided a means for the “community”, most strongly associated with the landscape, to moderate the power of the individual farm family. Three examples bear repeating here: first, the collective ritual of Midsummer out in the landscape as seen in figure 12, and second, the related opposed custom of vacating the family living and dining space for the spirits at Midwinter seen in figure 11, and third, hanging the master of the farm in effigy from the ridge beam after helping him build his new dwelling. The attempt of the Lutheran Church to replace dwelling ritual after the Reformation sought to better fuse traditional meaning of *stue* with church structure. Part of the effect of rotating new *stues* 90° may have been to better associate the meaning of “master” in the dwelling to pastor in the church pulpit, hence strengthening his authority. Rite of passage rituals in the *stue*--birth, weddings, and death—are symbolically encouraged to shift to embellished Lutheran church interiors. In spite of the apparent landscape scale at which the sense to change orientation of new dwellings in fjords or valleys occurs, the discursive side of the farm culture, and particularly the church, in effect seeks to reduce the size of formal ritual practices from landscape to architecture.

Regardless of these late social changes in farm society, much traditional “folk” symbolism, actually of pre-Christian origin, likely existed in the minds and even ritual practices of emigrants going to Minnesota in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century. The ethnographies recorded only a couple of decades after in Norway also clearly illustrate an effective, essentially non-Christian, social organization based on the structure and function of farms in these limited agricultural landscapes—though not particularly causally related by these Scandinavian ethnographers with symbolic expression in the same settings, including the parish church. How then does one describe the role of the Lutheran church setting and organization in relation to the folk beliefs and farm organization of immigrants? In a “discursive” dimension, the church certainly played a patriarchal, hierarchical role associated with the old master of the farm, theoretically constrained by landscape based “non-discursive” practices of community.

But given that the primary social opposition balanced farm dwelling/family with community/landscape, the church may have played more significant other discursive roles. Key here may have been European Lutheran beliefs, mostly pertaining to salvation, and increasingly nationalistic ideas about Norway as an emerging modern state. The parish church, priest and functions paid for by the state, collected demographic data for births, weddings and deaths in Norway. One's citizenship came from church records. Were these purposes more important than the parish churches' role in promoting conventional Christian belief? To what degree did parish congregations in relatively remote valleys and fjords need to be persuaded to be Lutheran, or for that matter that heaven was to be valued as a place over their ancient landscape still inhabited by little people. Scandinavians still today believe in the "elves", Iceland as the best example. From research quoted in Booth (2014: 139):

"In 1998 a poll revealed that 54.4 percent said they believed in elves. Another, carried out as recently as 2007, revealed that 32 percent believed the existence of the hidden people was "possible", 16 percent said "probable", and 8 percent were certain that elves existed. Many Icelanders even felt able to specify the type of elf they believed in: 26 percent believed in flower elves; 30 percent in house elves; 42 percent in guardian angels. To put this into perspective, only 45 percent of Icelanders believe in God."

Icelanders came primarily from Norway just before the previous turn of the millennium. Though certainly every folk person in late nineteenth century rural Norway would have said they believed in a Christian God, all undoubtedly would have *also* said they believed in little people associated with the landscape. Can different *kinds* of cultural process and religion reside comfortably in the same mind?

By the time of emigration, after a century or two of revised Lutheran church practice, how completely were the three rites of passage more firmly associated with the parish church site than the farm dwelling in its social landscape context? One has the sense, from examples like Holsen and Haukedal, that the dwelling remained important for all three, but that burials at the graveyard may have been the most collective, ritual purpose of the church. Also difficult to map is where and how farm communities in the 1870's celebrated the major collective rite at Midsummer, traditionally associated with a natural site. A few immigrants may have had experience in creating new graveyards and orienting churches in Norway, as at Haukedal, though most expansion of interior church space occurred by replacing or enlarging existing structures on their Middle Ages sites.

Unquestionably when investigating the use of symbolism and space in immigrant Minnesota, one should logically keep in view the ancient Scandinavian opposition between family (individual) and community—still active today in many modern institutions. The setting for cultural expression of this opposition in the Norwegian farm culture of the late nineteenth century was the farm landscape, i. e. between master of the farm and collective groups at “*dugnad*” and “*belag*” scales. Farm as hierarchical pole still functioned as a ritual element, with little discursive elaboration of the *stue* and other farm buildings. And while churchyard also played a primary ritual role, particularly for burials, church architecture had always been less discursively constrained. Ultimately, the parish church may have become most symbolic of discursive processes *per se*. While the most important hierarchical element remained the farm and dwelling, still ritually integrated in the landscape, the church represented the way community managed its relationships with larger scale, non-discursive authority, i.e. the state, Lutheranism, and nationalism. Large scale discourse was necessary, but seems to have been subordinated, not unlike the ritual dwelling, to the landscape community. What then happens to these ways of using different forms of religious process in the Minnesota landscape?

Township center lines, meridians and cross points as New Norwegian Landscape

Most research on immigrant life emphasizes the role of Lutheran Church in the formation and maintenance of early “community”. The church served not only, or even primarily, religious belief, but social and economic needs in relation to a new and relatively unorganized American frontier. Implicit is the assumption that discursive forms of religion, not unlike much of nineteenth century America, were capable of generating solidarity within congregations. Furthermore, belief intimately related to doctrine--the paramount example of discourse--thus attracts research interest in situations where synod conflicts arose. Yet from the present view of these farmer’s lives in Norway, the church clearly was *not* the primary organizing power for *dugnads* and *belags*, spatial farm groups that practiced very old customs that ethnographers such as Frimanslund (1956) called “community”. How, one immediately asks, could a cultural “institution” that associated with both the master of the farm, and perhaps more so with patriarchal church and nation, become the primary means by which Norwegian immigrants organized “community” on the prairie? This only makes sense if one assumes that in nineteenth century America, especially on the frontier, the *only* available cultural process available for

social organization was belief created by discursive, competitive means, mainly relying on the interpretation of texts by patriarchies and not unrelated territoriality.

Certainly the very first immigrant act is territorial and fundamentally self-interested in the securing of land for the family. One of the best narratives of this side of the Norwegian social equation—perhaps influencing the dominance of this view in academic work that followed—occurs in O. E. Rolvaag’s chapter in *Giants in the Earth* (1925). Hubbard’s excellent history of surveying also details this story (2008:306). Illegally moving a survey stake constituted a serious act of an individual against the farm community in Norway (Gjerde 1985:27). For this reason, perhaps, Rolvaag develops the drama of Per Hansa’s destruction of survey markers bearing the names of Irish immigrants—who the previous spring had first legally claimed the adjacent quarter section--replacing them with markers for his Norwegian neighbor family (116-128). While the phenomenology of knowing the position of one’s section survey stakes in the wild, tall prairie grass rings true as a common immigrant experience, the image of an almost territorial association of ethnic “neighbors” or “friends” may be misleading, given the importance of larger more formally organized social groups in Norway. With respect to church congregations at least, Gjerde’s mapping shows Norwegian farms to be quite dispersed and less territorial. Certainly in Norway, particularly in the practices of *dugnad*, propinquity at quite small scales determined who helped who with functional work exchange. But as the numbers of farmers increase, whether in Norway or Minnesota, with or without competition from other ethnicities, simple adjacency cannot be a significant factor in the social strength developed by church congregations. In congregation histories one frequently reads of very small groups of immigrants that arrived and took land together, maybe two or three families, but not of scales comparable to *belags* or parishes in Norway.

A surprisingly instructive parallel to the Norwegian’s new experience in America can be cited in the recent, 1960-70’s transformation of office building settings in Sweden. Up to this time offices were still primarily discursive, i.e. highly patriarchal, territorially located in cities and competitive in architectural style (Doxtater 1994). At this time the numbers of office workers exceed that of industrial workers, and white collar employees continue earlier won union rights to participate in the design of work settings. The first decision all make in group pre-design meetings (for up to a year before construction of a new office building), is for each individual to have his or her own office, almost always with a window. This is tantamount to

early Norwegians taking relatively equal homestead property as the necessary act of establishing the “individual” or competitive pole of the social equation. What soon follows in the unusual, modern shared experience of design evolution across Sweden is the inclusion of formally articulated cooperative spaces for socially mandatory breaks and large lunch meal. The location of collective components at two and sometimes three scales provides the overall ritual-like cognitive structure that integrates and even subordinates the individual office cells for *all* employees. Yet photos of their office interiors reveal an impressive shared discourse of furnishing style equal to most managerial or executive offices in other modern societies.

Swedish office evolution may have replicated aspects of traditional Scandinavian farm culture, particularly the spatial opposition between individual and collective social spaces. Absent in the office building, of course, are associations with sacred directions, cross forms and the like. While these clearly still existed in historic farm societies, the simple, small scale patterns of social movement between individual and cooperative places in the farm landscape can be considered a kind of “local ritual” operating as much on a frequency of spatially perceived social exchange as on power from religious symbolism (Doxtater 1994:31). Offices, however, are much more intensely used social settings at small scale compared to traditional farm landscapes where beliefs in sacred components appear to have been expressively fundamental. Ethnographers like Frimannslund and Berg, as mentioned however, did not ascribe a causal importance to symbolic elements of the non-Christian landscape. Swedish offices in the last thirty or forty years, at least, have been culturally unique in the world, in that they use “local ritual” designed into building layout to first establish the basic social equation of the total occupying group. Once established, office work proceeds largely with minimal interference from all the discursive persuasion that can seep into work—attempting to attach social hierarchy to the structure of functional process.

A similar evolution may have occurred as Norwegians occupied land in Minnesota. First, relatively equal, usually quarter section sized property is taken by individual families. What, then, keeps settlers of this ethnicity from developing larger territories consisting of adjacent farms defined by Norwegian identity? Perhaps it is primarily that the temporal sequencing of immigrants strings out over thirty years or more, making tightly adjacent territorial clusters of Norwegians difficult if not impossible (as seen in Gjerde’s mapping). Yet in the case of the

Minnesota River matrix, something appears to keep other ethnicities and religions from creating territories during several decades of settlement.

The most significant reason why the Norwegian settlement process was not more territorial in Minnesota, however, is probably because spatial relationships between farms at home in Norway were not territorially “up for grabs” as in a modern discursive society. Rather, they were traditionally structured by slow, communally mediated processes of change when subdivision of family farms became necessary. The cultural, spatial structure of the landscape maintained itself by using appellations of “north”/“south”, “upper”/“lower”, “inner”/“outer”, etc. *Dugnad* and *belag* practices were integral with these maps. This structure, at least in the Holsen example, appears to have included the location of the churchyard and perhaps orientation of the building. Yet the collective farm landscape had probably long been largely independent of church location, burial function notwithstanding. Territoriality would have been associated with locations of some on large farms, and with later more purely discursive roles of the Lutheran Church.

The relationship *between* parishes, as seen in the maps of Sognefjord and Valdres, is logically a discursive product of larger scale political processes that began in the Middle Ages and were strongly institutionalized as part of the state at the time of emigration. Research is needed, however, to determine whether the unique landscape settings of parish valleys or fjords somehow structured a collective component at scales like Sognefjord and Valdres. Once historically and more discursively established, did parishes become somewhat constrained in their territorial ambitions vis-à-vis adjacent parishes? Could inhabitants in nineteenth century topographies imagine their parish competing with other parishes for territory? This of course is the image of competing Lutheran doctrines in Minnesota, and even more explicitly landscape and architectural space in America. In spite of considerable research in Norwegian traditional settings, when the present work began the author didn't recognize the Norwegian word “*menigheter*” or “congregations”. The landscape related term for church group “*sogn*” or “parish” in a particular landscape was well understood. But *menigheter*, not *sogn*, is used in Norlie's massive survey and doctrine diagrams for Norwegian Lutheran immigrants to America (all in Norwegian). It is as if *menigheter*, in contrast to *sogn*, implies a largely discursive group not tied to a particular landscape context.

Beyond establishing individual farm territories, what follows in replicating the collective component on the frontier prairie? What would allow Norwegian settlers arriving along a spectrum of time to feel a similar stability in this landscape, allowing a peaceful association of *bedlag*-like groups and/or congregations across a larger landscape? Additionally, and more problematically, the prairie landscape in Southwest Minnesota offered far less topographic uniqueness and perhaps “structural” permanence to graveyard (church) location.

While Johnson (1974) intuited some capacity of the universal section system to structure culture in immigrant landscapes, and in spite of her mention of Eliade, she did not see any special contribution of township patterns in this regard. Certainly she did not know, nor had the tools to discover, that during the early period of replicating particularly Norwegian landscapes, these people had clearly used township center lines across significant distances to align their churchyards. Conventionally the role of township organization--present in most Minnesota areas immediately after their interiors had been surveyed in the late 1860's and early 1870's--has been seen as a relatively minor, wholly functional entity. Virtually no social science literature attends to these largely voluntary committees taking care of small tasks, at least before ubiquitous section roads appeared in the early 20th century. Nor do township center points represent any common tendency for economic development at these places. While many townships eventually build very modest structures at centers to keep warm and dry during meetings (possibly in association with building section roads), buildings most often sit alone at these intersections, adorned only by a modest sign with the township name. But there is symbolism here. These cross points do not become discursively oriented commercial or administrative villages or for the most part favorite places for church structures. The simple unadorned architecture of “town hall” when it occurs at its cross roads, however, speaks to an egalitarian, collective component in the farm landscape.

Hypothetically, it wasn't the actual work that earliest township organization did that led to their prominence in the Minnesota River matrix, but the *idea* of collective practice at a place formally understood in both directions at the middle of the thirty-six square mile surveyed pattern. While probably not strongly resonating with traditional spiritual power of *axes mundi*—though some would not be surprising—township center pattern offered an immutable landscape structure open to adaptation for non-discursive, community purposes. This could have been immediately perceived as analogous to the way *belag* organization mapped in Norwegian valleys

and fjords, albeit without the strict formal grid (though again more research on orientation “system” phenomena is needed in Norway).

Generalizing, if each immigrant in a wholly Norwegian township took a quarter section, this would be 144 farms, or the equivalent of 30-40 *dugnads*, maybe a half dozen *belags*, or a very large congregation such as at Bergen (Minnesota River). Of course the gradual buildup of homesteads precluded any neat territorial use of formal township layout, i.e. by contiguous section homesteads with a churchyard at the center. The scale of township layout was abnormally large for all three scales of landscape organization experienced in Norway. This obviously makes sense given the fact that Norwegian farms in the valleys and fjords were much smaller than the quarter section homestead provision of the standard township. In Gjerde’s study of the Balestrand region (on Sognefjord), in 1865, a typical parish served about fifty farms (1985:61), which in turn would have been subdivided into several *bedlags* and more numerous *dugnads*. Minnesota Norwegian farms were much more dispersed, especially from the start, and even when the land became fully occupied. The election of first township councils would not have corresponded nicely, in either spatial scale or council numbers, to any social scale in Norway, especially the most important, the *bedlag*, traditionally that group of farms that mutually invited each other for rite of passage and perhaps even midsummer ritual.

The first groups of farm families in the Minnesota River area forming Lutheran congregations may have been more similar to the scale of the *bedlag*, than parish. Furthermore their early collective practices resemble “local ritual” in that without a church for a decade or more, they move around the landscape for services either in dwellings or groves in the summer, just as the *bedlag* ritual group did in valley and fjord Norway. Soon, of course, the need to bury the deceased brings to the fore what may have been the primary landscape ritual function of the church setting in Norway; yet before and even immediately after the organization of congregations burials took place on farms, sometimes with non-family members as well.

The most important act of a new congregation, perhaps even more so than hiring a permanent pastor, was to locate and obtain ownership of a cemetery site. If one assumes that these groups, in spite of having a traveling pastor (visiting only monthly or even less), are culturally *bedlags*, how does this change interpretation of site choice? In Norway, the spatial relationship between *bedlags* and parishes is not well mapped. And church locations predate by several hundred years what is ethnographically known about these Norwegian farm communities.

But in Minnesota *bedlags* appear to be choosing the focus at the next larger spatial scale (parish). While the size of the township and its center doesn't fit any of the three social scales in Norway, these early township council groups--organized largely contemporaneously with first congregations—may have been felt to be something of a fusion of *dugnad* (work related) and *belag*. Hemple's documentation shows the Norwegian Grove township committee in Ottertail County to be entirely comprised of members of these early *bedlag* scaled congregational groups.

Perhaps it shouldn't be surprising that early *bedlag*-like congregational councils, whose members overlap with township councils, choose sites for a new cemetery and eventual church yard positioned on township center lines. Again, most cemeteries do not sit at township center points themselves, but elsewhere on center lines. At the time of choosing a cemetery site, nothing would have been built at the cross point, neither roads nor modest town hall. Is it here that some ancient memory of sacred center in Scandinavian artifacts and still practiced landscape rituals mingles with the *bedlag* associated actors of congregation and township councils? These lines, after all, were kind of super section lines, complete perhaps with superstitions about contact with the spiritual world at cross points. Did the Sadliek family feel this same reverence for lines in the Nebraska landscape when they buried the father right on axis between the three church cemeteries in the larger area?

Most important in this concluding interpretation is the fact that, not unlike the Cather example, symbolism of quasi-sacred township center lines was not limited in scale to any particular township itself, but ran to a much wider landscape. This may say as much or more about precedent larger scale concepts of cultural landscape in Norway, than the association of religious cemetery sites with functional duties of particular township organizations. Did these early church councils symbolically intuit that the new Norwegian landscape will or should eventually transcend *bedlag*, and by association, township scale? Such a key issue in this interpretation, however, would certainly benefit from related research mapping of church location in Norway. Especially at the time of emigration, did parishioners in Norway sense that the wider natural landscape structured a fixed spatial and social relationship between particular churches?

While the longest possible structuring concept in the matrix ran from Palmyra to the original West Yellow Medicine as a cardinal east-west, more prominent and numerous are the multiple, convincing examples of aligning churchyards on meridian township center lines. This

pattern holds for several examples in Ottertail County as well as in at least eight North-South lines in the Minnesota River matrix. In research on smaller scale ritual layouts of folk period Norwegian farms (Doxtater 1981), pervasive *axis mundi* concepts of center or cross connect a “below” to an “above”, yet most importantly for actual ritual practice, the “vertical” is symbolically fused with the North-South direction as laid out in the farmstead (as when the straw from cleaning the deceased is burned on the farm mound to the north). North symbolism likely remained effective as well in cross axes of at least some standing Middle Ages churches used by emigrants, e.g. Alstahaug and Vaernes (figure 8). Such syncretic *axis mundi* symbolism might have also influenced positioning multiple churchyards on larger scale centerline meridians.

A larger scale concept of North as ultimate place of the spirits, beyond the scale of farm or church, was most likely understood by immigrants through the still well-known fairy tale “East of the sun, West of the moon” collected by Asbjornsen & Moe (1962) in the decades from 1840 to 1870. Though similar in structure to Pan-European versions, the Norwegian tale traces the mythic landscape search of the young bride in an effort to release her husband to be from a troll’s spell. She journeys first East then West, then South and finally to the *North* where ultimate spiritual power resides. When one maps wedding ritual recorded in the late 1800’s on farms, the spatial pattern and symbolic acts appear to replicate this folktale (Doxtater 1981:201); or more theoretically, the folktale replicates the symbolically primary and effective ritual on the ground.

The orientations of immigrant churches on matrix meridians appear to have been chosen by congregation councils to align with either North-South symbolism and/or more purely social history ties to other churches on the line. Again, the orientation of new churches in an existing cemetery was a recorded agenda item in council meetings, though discussion or reasons for choice appear not to have been transformed to writing. The meridian church of Wang oriented its entrance to the North, while Vestre Sogn, the congregation from which it split three miles south on the line, faces South. Does facing each other in this manner suggest a greater meaning for social history of the congregation than symbolic power of North-South *axes mundis*? In the folk farm in Norway, thresholds always faced South, to protect from the ultimate spiritual power of the North; only coffin windows were cut opening North in the traditional *stue* (the 18th century reoriented *stue* with windows now on the long walls, tends not to have windows in the two ante chambers to the North, see again figure 14).

Standing or site apparent church entrance orientations in the Minnesota River matrix sort roughly equally to the four directions, always parallel to cardinal or meridian lines. This fact tells us at the very least that some concept or concepts of “religious” directions in the larger scale landscape were shared within and probably between Norwegian congregations; no universal Christian east-west orientation prevailed, in sharp contrast to the constant east-west orientation of graves. While some church orientations clearly relate to immediate neighbors, like Wang and Vestre Sogn, and might be explained solely on a common congregational or social history, this is not the case with the majority of churches. Their orientations appear to best explained by their relation to much larger scale alignment patterns. A simple common history interpretation of Wang and Vestre Sogn facing each other seems almost territorial--both in the same township--and works against meaning of the two churches in relation to the other five churches also on the meridian, many served in common by pastor Erikson.

The orientation of North and South churches in Granite Falls (figure 45), both on the township center line a block apart, also run parallel to this meridian. Their south oriented entrances, however, do not face each other, in spite of their common congregational history. This north-south division line in the evolving layout of the town may have been appropriated as a more central “urban” meridian in the middle of the matrix; its first church, eventually called “North” is built in 1882. Its orientation south possibly alluded to its larger scale position north of the major east-west line associated for two decades with Yellow Medicine congregations. Replicating both the meridian location and south facing entrance, the split “South” church in 1894 may have been more intent on maintaining that original, larger scale meaning, than expressing social histories of people attending churches only a block apart.

The term “homologue” can refer to spatial patterns of symbolism and ritual replicated in different settings, often at different scales. One further measure of culturally created meaning of church locations and orientations may be the repetition of components, particularly with regard to meridians, at new village or town scales. The orientation and meridian orientation of the “South” church in Granite Falls is not alone in its possible homologue expression. Its construction date of 1894 falls between church building at Rock Valle in 1891 and Hanley Falls in 1898. These two structures as well orient north-south and may have been built from the same plans and elevations. While Rock Valle is not in a village or town, church form may express its location on the intersection of the strongest meridian of the matrix (Hawk Creek, et. al.) and the

originating east-west line from West Yellow Medicine to Palmyra. It faces south, perhaps associating its major (male) entrance on the east to the large congregation's role on that side of the matrix--a replication or homologue between architectural and landscape scales. The two headstone lists of those interred in the earlier cemeteries (without churches), at the front of the large cemetery across the road to the south of Rock Valle church, can also be considered as homologue. The pair of memorials, one on each side of the cemetery entrance, reproduces the formal larger scale landscape pattern of the two original cemeteries.

The possible expressive intent in the positioning and orientation of Rock Valle's twin church in Hanley Falls has been discussed, figure 39. The triangular layout of the town, as homologue, may have complimented to the west the large scale intersection meaning of Rock Valle to the east. While Hanley Falls or Yellow Medicine's relation to a meridian receives less formal expression than Rock Valle (though Bergen and Silo seem to provide some formality in this regard) it sits on the town's most prominent north-south street. This road, in turn mimics the north-south road edge of the town triangle running from the bridge over the Yellow Medicine River down to the intersection with the cardinal line on which the (original) West and later East (Hanley Falls) cemeteries for the Yellow Medicine congregation align. Both Rock Valle and Hanley Falls churches seem to express their importance to larger scale features of the matrix. The facing of the Hanley Falls church to the north, opposite its twin at Rock Valle, could be consistent in an expression of the congregation's importance on the west side of the matrix; its male steeple and entrance are to the west as one views the front façade.

The importance of meridian streets in the villages of Clarkfield (figure 37) and Vesta (figure 44) provide additional design evidence of the pervasiveness of matrix concepts in the minds not only of church members and pastors, but perhaps surveyors and administrators as well. The formal positioning of Clarkfield Lutheran in 1885 at the northern climax of Clarkfield's most prominent meridian street may be one of the best "urban" design examples. Did it replicate as well Clarkfield's larger scale meridian association with Spring Creek and St. Lukas on the line to the south (immediately parallel to township center line)? And at Vesta, did the "Broadway Avenue" meridian, with its Norwegian and German Lutheran churches, nicely balance (via homologue) the offset of township center meridians that happens in Redwood County, symbolically linking this southernmost part of the matrix to the Hawk Creek-Rock Valle meridian?

Integrative effects of the play between “discursive” and “non-discursive”

Without a doubt the most important interpretation of the present mapping exercise is the new perspective by which one views social process of Norwegian immigrants in these particular landscapes. Once one recognizes that these folks formally positioned churchyard sites on or related to township meridian center lines at matrix scales—rather than being located either for territorial or functional transportation reasons—then it becomes clear that an emphasis on conflicts and resulting splitting of congregations radically diminishes in the face of obvious *integration* of congregations both within and between synods. The simple listing of reasons for division in the matrix area would have shown that separation because of conflicts may have only occurred in two situations, Granite Falls and Vestre Sogn. Most of the rest divided because of growing settler numbers and distances of travel to churches. However, it may be precisely this prosaic fact that explains the Minnesota River Matix as cultural landscape phenomenon. Given the social sensitivity of landscape to forms of occupation by individuals and social groups, the ability of *bedlag*-like congregations to fission, even including those few with synod disputes, could actually have been *facilitated* by the symbolic integrating properties of the matrix concept as cultural landscape.

This effect of aligning different synod congregations to the same line, often a meridian at obviously perceived close distances, reveals itself very early on. By 1875 we find a “low” church (Hauges or Hs) on the same line with a “high” church (Norwegian or Ns) a little over two miles apart in Ottertail County, figure 20. And less than a mile apart in the eastern part of Renville County another “high” and “low” church pair, Fort Ridgely and Hauges Central, locate on the lower end of the meridian with Palmyra, figure 23. Repeating this pattern, again at close range very early on a (super) township meridian is Our Savior’s (Ns) and Hoff (Hs), figure 27, though the cemetery date for Hoff remains in question. The early and very close pair of Bergen (Ns) and Camp Release (Kf) provides yet another example, but with a “middle” or *Konferensen* (Kf) synod congregation keeping company with the Ns heir to the Norwegian state church.

Within a few years one finds the aligned triads diagramed in figure 33. All running interestingly enough east-west, three of these integrate the eastern Ns pastor, Bergh, the western Ns pastor, Thorstensen, with the Kf pastor, Eriksen appropriately in the “middle” (as that early synod was described). The fourth and southernmost pastoral integration links only the

Thorstensen-Bergh pair. The ultimate pastoral diagram of figure 46 exhibits continued integration of new churches and evolving synods, at least up to the turn of the century. By the 1890's the long cardinal from Opdal in the east to St. Paul in the west includes Ns, Fk (*Forenede* or United), Hs, and As (Augustana) synods, seven congregations in all served by six different pastors. The Hawk Creek-Rock Valle meridian positions four Fk churches, one remaining Ns, and one Am (Anti-Missouri) synod. The Krogfus (Opdahl) – Opdal meridian pair provides a late example of Hs – Ns integration, though at a larger scale than earlier ones.

Surely traveling pastors, such as Eriksen on the Hawk Creek – Rock Valley meridian must have understood that groups of their churches aligned in a still wild prairie landscape. Furthermore one finds numerous obviously perceived or understood examples of aligned “mother-daughter” churches from the same congregation and synod, not dissimilar to “inter-synod” alignments described above. But who had greatest influence, pastors or councils, in the positioning of cemetery sites (and their later churches) in the overall evolution of the matrix over about three decades? Pastors served primarily a “discursive” role in Norwegian farm culture, again functioning to mediate a more conscious, individual choice about salvation and socio-political relations to Lutheranism and perhaps Norwegian and eventually American nationalism at non-local scales. The cultural experience of *bedlag*-like congregations and their councils, however, were also interested in replicating the stable landscape structures of family farms and perhaps even some stable context of parish foci in natural topographies of Norway. The social role of these structures was integrative, effectively balancing the more competitive elements in both family and church.

This non-discursive, “ritual” side of the equation, while evident in careful mapping, is difficult to link to actual experiences in the landscape, as unreported as they are in “discursive” media and processes. One can imagine, however, the new cognitive spatial experience—unlike anything in Norway—as homesteaders traveled around in prospective places to settle. Essential was a reasonably functional wayfinding map of how largely invisible section lines lay across the land. Township structure, including boundaries and centers, would have been background to more conscious deliberations on where to settle. Most likely one didn't just ride around the wild landscape by horse until finding a suitable place to farm. Other spatial information would have been useful though more intuitive, i.e. how did existing homesteads lay out in the area, or how did wild infrastructure of major rivers or roads relate to the grid.

To these cognitive legal and wayfinding maps, Norwegians might early on have felt some traditional cross symbolism associated with section line intersections and especially township centers—points in the natural landscape where some sort of contact with spirits might be expected. Clearly, *some* sort of such spiritual meaning caused them to align their places of burial—beyond the more discursively, politically symbolic and limited functional role of township organization. But how did this landscape meaning compare to what one finds in primitive or pre-literate traditional societies such as the native Sioux of the Yellow Medicine River area? Certainly one must distinguish between Indian use of the landscape for its primary access to ritual power, and the remnants of pre-literate practices that still took place in the folk farm culture of Norway at the time of emigration. Even though Minnesota Norwegians cognitively understood and aligned their burial places across township center lines, particularly meridians, where are the calendrical rites at certain matrix points that serve to maintain and express the social balance between individual (family) and collective (*bedlag* or parish)? One finds no record if or where Norwegians in this period came together at Midsummer, possibly at integrative scales larger than congregations and at a non-church, ideally natural point on the matrix (not unlike Iceland). Did early Norwegians make Midsummer pilgrimage to the peninsula point of the Minnesota River, figure 29, where this unique natural feature coincides with township center lines? Probably not, given the territorial impression such would give to other ethnicities using the Granite Falls trade locus.

At a much smaller scale, one must also ask if and how knowledge of the matrix maintained its efficacy for parishioners in the years following cemetery location. While integration might be most socially important at the time of positioning a burial ground--minimizing possible territoriality with other Norwegian groups--wouldn't there continue to be social benefit from intuiting a subtle moderation of the "discourse" of one's own church by the matrix landscape? Once churches and their steeples rose in cemetery yards, they likely became the major architectural features in the otherwise still wild prairie (though small schools were being built off township center lines as in figure 38). Norwegian congregants probably knew of their particular churches' geometric relationship to a section line, usually at the center of townships. But when traveling through the larger matrix area, still a sea of prairie without section roads, the sight of any other church in the landscape might have immediately brought to mind the implicit question as to the line on which it sits. As folk took crops to market, built schools,

recreated on the banks of rivers, or visited Norwegians not in their congregation but from common places in Norway, perhaps, they could have maintained an understanding of wider cultural dimensions of the matrix.

The practice of attending church, while important for discursive purposes of insuring one's salvation and linkage to one particular Lutheran synod or another in America, may well have carried significant associations to the matrix map. Knowing the line on which the building sat—and probably the line's linkage to other church lines—would have been reinforced by entering the church on its axis. The orientation of these churches as a topic of council decision making and their choices of all four directions clearly demonstrates some important locally understood meaning. Entering the church on a particular directional axis invoked this symbolism, and could have been associated with the churchyard's formal landscape context at least within a portion of the matrix. Sitting or kneeling during services may also have contributed to landscape related meaning actually *during the peak media based processes of worship*. Farmers must have been always aware of landscape maps, whether primarily for wayfinding or as part of the Minnesota River matrix. As worshipers, these sub-conscious maps would likely have been linked to one's orientation in the pews.

Perhaps the best example of a fusion of very large scale map and orientation during prayer takes place as Muslims face Mecca in daily profane settings or in the mosque. Each practice creates a homologue effect as it uses orientation to build symbolic linkage between architectural settings at different scales of time, and concomitantly to large scale landscape conceptions of Mecca as a real point on the earth's surface. In terms of the present inquiry, Muslim homologues may provide something of an integrative, less conscious ritual component to a more conscious “discursive” message from Imam and Koran--pitched to individual minds.

In one of the real world setting exercises in Einar Haugen and Kenneth Chapman's remarkable language text (1947), the fictive visitor to a farm in Numedal--the very traditional valley highlighted on several occasions in the present work--asks whether it wouldn't be an easier life to live in the city. Tormod, the farmer replies: “Å nei, det kommer jeg aldri til å gjøre. Her bode far og fars far, og her vil jeg også bo til jeg dør” (ibid 261) [Oh no, I'll never do that. My father and his father lived here and I will live here until I die]. In this vein, records of folk customs document that in some places like Njordfjord, farmers, not just the elderly, kept their wooden coffin around and would take a nap in it at the “middle” or threshold time of noon

(Storaker 1935:55). These images of spiritual connections to farm, *bedlag* and parish become more vivid as one walks through Middle Age churchyards still in use today. At Saxhaug in north Trondheim fjord—its “*haug*” appellation suggests a prehistoric ritual site—it seems like all the people buried there are named “Saxhaug”. At what point do Norwegian farmers start more “discursively” believing that salvation takes one to a distant heavenly place not part of their ancient landscape?

Certainly emigrating to a culturally neutral landscape in America in the period from 1870-1900 fueled the discursive side of their culture. This may have included a greater emphasis on the individual’s salvation and place in heaven, as a kind of substitute for their ancient landscape. And to what degree can the Minnesota River matrix be seen as primarily marking a non-integrative Norwegian territory in competition with the Sioux, other European ethnicities, and “Americans”? Norwegians obviously “controlled” the matrix if the locations and architecture of their churchyards are primarily interpreted as signs or representations of occupation and ownership. Certainly the matrix might have carried these meanings to outsiders, while internally working to integrate and moderate these same territorial tendencies among dividing congregations. Yet matrix integration occurs with other Lutheran churches who spoke German, Swedish, Danish and Finnish, working beyond the division of Norwegian congregations. Even some Methodist churches, as in the Nebraska example, have participated in the Norwegian matrix. Considering these additional players, though mostly on the fringe, one has difficulty seeing where the external territorial threat came from. Catholic Irish and Germans are largely absent.

What would have happened if the township grid hadn’t existed--the earlier case both in Minnesota and to the east--not just as a legal expedient in organizing homesteading but in terms of tendencies for ethnic groups to settle in territorial enclaves? While a question for future comparative research, most likely early Norwegian conceptions of cemetery location and church orientation provided continuity with their cultural experiences in the Norwegian landscape, which largely lacked histories of competition with other religious or ethnic groups. The coincidence of finding an abstract, symbolically resonating framework recently laid out on the Minnesota River prairie, provided, at least for a few decades, an integrative means to the social balance so characteristic of Scandinavian culture.

EPILOGUE

Change in the cognitive understanding and integrative effect of the matrix as the landscape modernizes is another story beyond the present inquiry into larger scale ritual or ritual-like processes. The first major shift no doubt occurred as the matrix with churches as primary cultural landmarks transforms into grids of section roads whose meaning associates more with the extension of cultivation to property lines, and related functions of industrializing farming. Maps in the mind become more reflective of how to work one's farm and get produce to market more efficiently. One may think it an easy task to find one's way on section roads, but by chance one of the farmers interviewed in the present research had been a UPS driver for some years. When the author arrived on time for the interview at his farm, he was somewhat surprised at an ability to navigate the grid with its sightlines limited by rolling hills and occasional omissions in road segments at watercourses (admittedly the Hawk Creek area where he and his family live has more of these). Furthermore, resident farmers in the matrix don't seem to be aware that these Norwegian churches line up across larger distances, though of course about half the churches are now missing as landmarks.

A wayfinding map reliant on section roads largely for transportation may be quite different than a township centerline construct marked primarily by churches. Ubiquitous section roads seldom suggest the layout of township centers or center lines. Part of the transition of map character lies in increasing travel speed, where landmarks shift to places where gravel roads intersect with county paved roads or junctions where these roads then tie into state and national highways. The growth of villages and towns of course creates their legibility as nodes in the context of good roads. Finally, the church steeple as most prominent artifact on the prairie has been almost obliterated by the height and number of storage silos and bins, not only at railroad sidings, but on individual farms as well.

Curiously, however, when interviewing and participating socially with Norwegian-American farmers, mostly in the Sacred Heart area, one still senses the "non-discursive" tendency to do things together with other Norwegian-American farmers in defined areas of the rural landscape. Yet non-local modern day voluntary organizations such as the Sons of Norway—predominantly located in towns or cities—alternatively provide a discursive version of Norwegianess in the context of ethnic and social diversity even in Minnesota. Lutheran church congregations still function with their councils that can overlap with township organization.

Here some of the old matrix effect may remain, e.g. the pastor of today's Hawk Creek and Rock Valle congregations travels back and forth for services on Sunday, not unlike those served by Eriksen on this early meridian. But motorized travel makes it much easier to change churches, among a much larger list of non-Lutheran offerings, as well as for people now living in towns to still attend churches in the landscape.

Most likely the integrative effects of matrix alignments are largely history, with the exception of some remnant linkage of churches on early lines, like Hawk Creek and Rock Valle, or occasional picnics between Wang and Hawk Creek congregations. Yet there may be very little awareness of township center meridian alignment, nor in all likelihood of traditional cross symbolism in relation to cemeteries and the old Scandinavian location of powerful gods in the North. The present study has not included any detailed search for landscape related spatial symbolism in church interiors, but suggestions for further research can be noted.

When first entering Hawk Creek Church Sunday morning for service with Elaine Johnson from SHAHS, she questioned her husband Michael if we should sit in their usual places (they grew up attending this church but now go to another). On two other separate occasions when interviewing Norwegian-Americans, the story comes out about some apparent stranger to the congregation who sits in the wrong place among the two sides of pews. The interloper is told by the rightful occupant in no uncertain terms that they must move. Is this a simple, but more enforced territoriality not unlike the way students somewhat permanently place themselves in classrooms for the term? Or could this be some sort of latter day homologue, where church interior serves as spatial map associated with the larger landscape, at least at the scale of the congregation? Elaine Johnson and a colleague did a quick test, and almost three quarters of the congregation sat in a pew area spatially analogous to their farm location in the "parish". If additional testing indicates, this could be a nice research project, particularly if one could trace the devolution of the old male (right), female (left) seating pattern (again still practiced in the less formal basement social area). Possible larger scale landscape meanings of this male-female duality—more as symbolic of the churches' position in matrix dualism--have been discussed in relation to the exterior steeple and entrance pairs in the three larger and later churches of Rock Valle, Yellow Medicine and Granite Falls. As these homologues declined in meaning, and a single symmetrical threshold replaced dual entrances, was interior male-female seating replaced by some geographic representation of now "parish" like congregational space? Socially, would

this be a kind of discursive, territorial expression of congregational identity that replaces the non-discursive, integrative feeling of being part of the matrix scale Norwegian landscape?

Also in terms of future research, a new look at the meaning and interior spatial context of religious art might reveal additional mysteries. During the service in Hawk Creek that Sunday in June, the author's architecturally and anthropologically trained mind admittedly wandered at times to the images and particularly carved wooden features of the altar area. In particular, the feature shown as figure 48 appeared for all the world to be a birdhouse positioned as decorative "keystone" at the top of the arch separating nave from altar. This point in the church is actually the most cross-like, lying at the intersection of main church axis with the most important perpendicular to it.



Figure 48. "Birdhouse" feature on altar arch in Hawk Creek Church (left, photo by Kayla Hegna), European cuckoo clock (right, open web photo).

During dissertation research on prehistoric and folk concepts of time, evidence was found of a spatio-temporal division of the year into "winter" and "summer" halves, imagined as northern and southern hemispheres (Nilsson 1920:316). Superimposed over this dualism were month-like subdivisions lending a rotational direction to the scheme. The spring "month" when winter transformed to summer was called the *Gauk* or cuckoo, its time/direction pointing east. Did Norwegian immigrant Andrew Wisted carve the birdhouse for a cuckoo? In Hawk Creek's church, as one sits in the congregation looking toward altar and birdhouse, one faces east, just as in the ancient concept. The shape of the birdhouse in the church resembles widely known cuckoo clocks, probably of European origin. Somewhere back in Germanic time and space, the

ritual that marked the movement from one half of the year to the other became associated with the arrival of the cuckoo bird in spring. Hence these clocks show the cuckoo emerging at marked ritual times, together with folk dancing in circles.

The returning cuckoo in spring plays a part of both folk and literary traditions in Norway, e.g. a famous tone poem in 1912, *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring*. In a conversation with Arne Berg, then director of the Folk Museum at Bygdøy (Oslo), about the traditional architecture of the log dwelling (*stue*), he mentioned that farmers called the uppermost log in the gable end “*gauken*” or cuckoo. Having seen diagrams of the old winter-summer concept and related *Gauk* month, and knowing the east-west traditional orientation of the *stue*, I asked whether this could be a symbolic association. After all, cuckoo clocks are dwellings, and the bird pops out from the peak of the gable. He and perhaps others had always considered the name to derive from the log’s bird-like shape, notched as it is on the upper side to receive the ridge beam. While this may be true in Post-Reformation *stues*, still of the same three part plan, Middle Ages *stues*, such as that shown in figure 9, had no ridge beam and hence no bird-like form because of the highly symbolic *axis mundi* smoke opening in the center of the dwelling space (stringers ran at intermediate positions between ridge and longitudinal wall). Back at Hawk Creek, this all made for interesting conversation after the service, pastor included. They called it a “bird house” when brought to their attention, but had no story associated with it. Why would a Norwegian carver design this feature and locate it as he did in 1880?

About three weeks after finishing fieldwork in the area, the author received word that the Hawk Creek church had been struck by lightning on the morning of July 23, 2016, figure 49. While the strike hit the steeple, and fire was initially confined to that area, a six-hour battle for containment couldn’t save the main part of the 140 year old wooden structure. Left standing largely intact was the eastern, altar area. With the recent discussion of cuckoo symbolism still fresh in mind, the fact that the fire stopped at the transverse cross line where the cuckoo stood has added a new element to the evolving “birdhouse” story--now part of congregational lore.

In the months since the fire, the Hawk Creek council, acting not unlike numerous Norwegian Lutheran predecessors faced with replacing the destruction of their church by lightning, have organized the rebuilding of the church on the same site. For obvious reasons it won’t have a steeple to memorialize its location in the historical matrix, but the carvings from the altar area by Andrew Wisted, along with other saved artifacts, will be displayed in an interpretative room as



Figure 49. Lightning caused fire at Hawk Creek church July 24, 2016; location of “birdhouse” on altar arch now fronting saved portion of structure (left photo by Kayla Hegnes, right by Elaine Johnson).

part of new construction. Will the displayed “birdhouse” face the right direction as part of its interpretation, or more interesting still, where is the best venue, architectural or landscape, to tell the untold story of the New Norwegian Landscape?

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