

# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

by Craig Rhombs



# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Starting a Family Near Trondheim.....	7
Emigration from Norway.....	7
Ole's Trek.....	8
Trondheim to Hull.....	8
Hull to Liverpool.....	10
Liverpool to Quebec.....	11
Quebec to Sioux Falls.....	14
After Sioux Falls.....	18
Caroline's Journey.....	18
Time in Centerville (SD).....	19
Life in Potter County (SD).....	20
Acknowledgments.....	21

## Table of Figures

Figure 1: Ole Thorsen.....	4
Figure 2: 1881 Calendar.....	4
Figure 3: Trondheim Harbor Painting.....	4
Figure 4: 1881 Sioux Falls Map.....	5
Figure 5: 1880-1881 Blizzard.....	6
Figure 6: Chicago and Northwestern RR Ad.....	6
Figure 7: Lebanon, SD, Ad.....	6
Figure 8: Caroline Olsdatter.....	7
Figure 9: Hegra Church.....	7
Figure 10: SS Tasso.....	8
Figure 11: Paragon Railway Station.....	10
Figure 12: Migration Through Hull.....	10
Figure 13: SS Moravian.....	11
Figure 14: Allan Line Flier - heading.....	11
Figure 15: Allan Line - meals.....	11
Figure 16: Allan Line - connections in America.....	12
Figure 17: 1882 Allan Line Flier.....	12
Figure 18: 1881 SS Moravian manifest -1.....	13
Figure 19: 1881 SS Moravian Manifest -2.....	13
Figure 20: 1881 SS Moravian Manifest -3.....	13
Figure 21: Quebec to Montreal - GTWR.....	14
Figure 22: Montreal to Port Huron - GTWR.....	15
Figure 23: Port Huron Map.....	15

# *Ole Goes to Sioux Falls*

Figure 24: Port Huron to Chicago.....	16
Figure 25: Chicago to Sioux Falls.....	16
Figure 26: Sioux Falls Depot.....	17
Figure 27: Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul RR map.....	17
Figure 28: Birth of Ole Olsen - 1.....	18
Figure 29: Birth of Ole Olsen - 2.....	18
Figure 30: Birth of Ole Olsen - 3.....	18
Figure 31: 1900 Federal Census - Potter Co., SD.....	18
Figure 32: SS Hero.....	19
Figure 33: BLM Land Patents -1.....	20
Figure 34: BLM Land Patents - 2.....	20
Figure 35: The Thompson/Olsen Family c.1910.....	21

# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

## Introduction

Ole Thorsen<sup>i</sup> was born in the Parish of Vågå in Oppland County, Norway, 16-December-1853.<sup>ii</sup> He died in 1929 in Potter Co., SD.<sup>iii</sup> He is a great grandfather of mine. The purpose of this article is to explain what I have discovered about his journey from Norway to Sioux Falls (Dakota Territory) in 1881. I hope that this information will be of interest to others whose ancestor(s) made a similar journey. Uncovering this information has given me a new respect for the resiliency of Ole and his wife, Caroline.

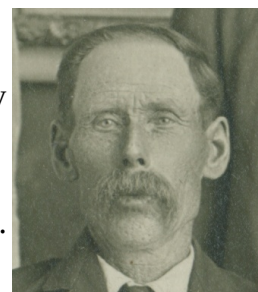


Figure 1: Ole Thorsen

Some information about the environment around him may be useful before delving into details of Ole's journey.

First, here is a period calendar for 1881 to help provide a temporal reference.<sup>iv</sup>

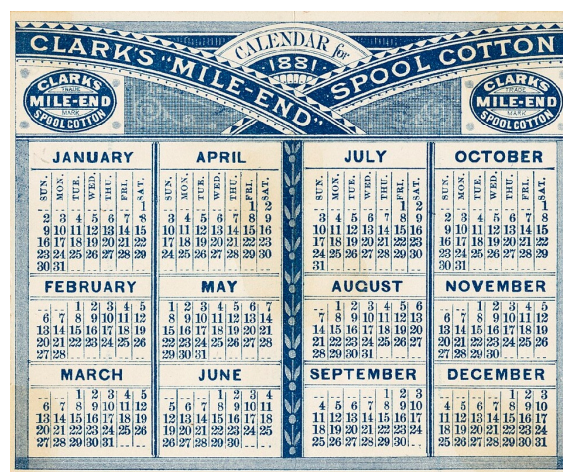


Figure 2: 1881 Calendar

Trondheim was Ole's starting point. Here is a painting showing the harbor area about 12 years after his departure.<sup>v</sup>



Figure 3: Trondheim Harbor Painting

# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

Sioux Falls (Dakota Territory) was Ole's destination. In 1880 its population was 2,164, but in 1890 it had grown to 10,177 – definitely a growing community, but still not much more than a village.<sup>vi</sup> A map follows that shows rail lines, which play an important part in his journey.<sup>vii</sup> The two rail lines that are apparent are the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul RR and the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha RR.



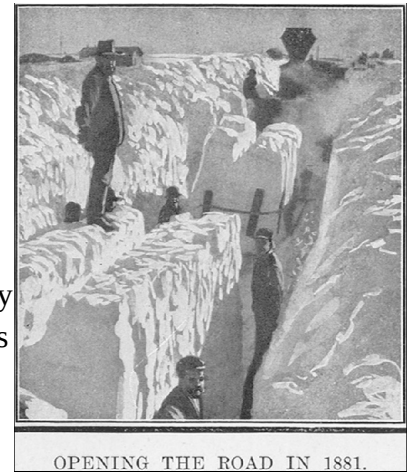
Figure 4: 1881 Sioux Falls Map

Then, there is the weather. - Assuming that temperatures at the time were similar to now, in Trondheim Ole probably experienced average temperatures in May from 40-60 F.<sup>viii</sup> In the Atlantic, temperatures were surely cold, and icebergs and ice fields were present as evidenced by ship logs from the era.<sup>ix</sup> Daily May temperatures in the vicinity of Montreal, a place that he must have passed near or through, average about 17 C (~63 F) or somewhat warmer than Trondheim.<sup>x</sup> At his destination, temperatures typically would range from about 50-70 F, milder but more variable.<sup>xi</sup>

# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

Temperature does not tell the whole story, however, especially in the upper mid-west. There was an historic blizzard and long winter in Dakota in the winter of 1880-81, the winter prior to Ole's arrival.<sup>xiii</sup> He may have encountered lingering snow on his arrival in Dakota, but we do not know details since weather observations did not start in Sioux Falls until 1890.<sup>xiii</sup> Much has been written about the impact of weather on Dakota history.<sup>xiv</sup> This winter is just one example.

And, as if the hard winter was not enough, it appears that there were very dry conditions in the mid-west after the hard winter. These resulted in large fires that Ole probably missed since they occurred later in the year.<sup>xv</sup> I can only wonder at what Ole must have thought about his new country. Certainly there was some hesitancy, but he had probably seen advertisements like the following to give him some hope about going to "God's Country."<sup>xvi</sup>



OPENING THE ROAD IN 1881.

Figure 5: 1880-1881 Blizzard

**2,000,000 FARMS of Fertile Prairie Lands to be had Free of Cost**

**CENTRAL DAKOTA**

The United States offers a gift Two Million Farms to Two Million Farmers who will settle and improve them. These Lands to be had free of cost and subject to certain conditions, and subject to the payment of the cost of the land.

**30 Millions of Acres**

of the best land in the world. The enclosed Map shows the location of these Lands.

**YOU NEED A FARM!**

Here is one you can get simply by occupying it. It will be noticed that the

**CHICAGO AND NORTHWESTERN**

Has Two Lines of Road that run through to these Lands. It is the only Rail Road that reaches them.

**HOW TO GET THERE**

AT CHICAGO YOU CAN BUY TICKETS AT

**BEAR IN MIND** Your agents should have complete list of lands.

**Chicago & North-Western R'y.**

Figure 6: Chicago and Northwestern RR Ad

**THE BLUE BLANKET VALLEY!**

Reached by way

**Lebanon, Potter County, Dakota.**

**Openings for Business Men!**

**CHOICE LANDS AT REASONABLE PRICES!**

**GOOD WATER & AN ABUNDANCE OF IT**

THE CROPS in this Valley have always been good. The farmers are thrifty and although the valley has only been settled four years there are many settlers in and around Lebanon. Corn, Wheat, Oats, Barley and Potatoes give good yields, as our farmers will testify. All kinds of Live Stock can be raised here to good advantage and profit. Hay--Range and Water, abundant.

**RAILROADS AND SCHOOLS**

Not a life nor a limb has been lost by frost or storm in Potter County this winter.

**TOWN OF LEBANON!**

Is Twelve Weeks old, and although settled late in the fall, has 30 business houses. Lebanon is surrounded by a first-class settlement. From its principal street you can see with the naked eye over 125 farm houses. In no part of Dakota will you find a more prosperous lot of farmers.

Our merchants and business men have plenty to do, are not afraid of competition, and guarantee you a business opening in almost any line of business.

Good Water can be Obtained by Digging Fifteen Feet.

**A GOOD OPENING FOR A FLOURING MILL.**

We are not booming for a metropolis, but we do claim the best trading point in Potter county. If you have energy and business ability with a little capital, you can be sure of a snug cozy business right here.

Your investment need not be large, but it will be safe. Merchants, livery men, mechanics, harness makers, shoe makers and professional men are invited to come and see this town. Farmers can get good lands from \$3 to \$7 per acre. The hardships of pioneer life are largely past. The country has been tested. It shows for itself. Come and help us build a town. No matter what your business, trade or occupation, you will find a fair chance here. Don't expect too much, but come and see. It don't take a fortune to buy a town lot in Lebanon. You can get prices and terms that are reasonable. See our large circulars for further information, or write to

**CHAS. W. SEARIGHT, Town Site Agent,**  
LEBANON, POTTER COUNTY, DAKOTA.

Union-Index Job Print. Gettysburg, D. T.

Figure 7: Lebanon, SD, Ad

And, now on to the details of Ole's journey. . . .

# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

## Starting a Family Near Trondheim

Ole married Caroline Olsen (Karoline Olsdatter Brattasvedjan) near Trondheim in the Øvre Stjørdal Parish of Nord-Trøndelag on 01-May-1881.<sup>xvii</sup> The record indicates that at the time he was living in the Mølsknæs community and working as a railway worker ( in Norwegian: jernbanearbeider ) .<sup>xviii</sup> The marriage possibly took place in the Hegra church, for which a modern picture follows.<sup>xix</sup>



Figure 8:  
Caroline  
Olsdatter



Figure 9:  
Hegra Church

Although it is not shown in this record, Caroline is pregnant at this time. A couple of months later on 11-July-1881, she gives birth to a child named Ole.<sup>xx</sup> This is significant background information for what follows.

## Emigration from Norway

Somewhat surprisingly to me, Ole emigrates from Norway without Caroline very shortly after the marriage. His destination is Sioux Falls, which was selected for reasons that I have not discovered. Perhaps he saw advertising; perhaps he knew someone who had made the trip already. Certainly he and Caroline had some serious discussions about emigrating.

And, I should mention that he was not abandoning Caroline (and child) since they followed him about seven months later. The details of Caroline's travel have not been discovered, but Ole's trip is somewhat better defined, which is why this article focuses on his journey.

Ole's emigration record is dated 04-May-1881 (a Wednesday), and it indicates that he was booked on a ship called the Tasso which was operated by the Allan Line.<sup>xxi</sup> His ultimate destination was Sioux Falls, but the details of the trip described below seem anything but simple. It should also be noted that he did not travel alone! Destinations for passengers on the Tasso for the same date indicate the following destinations, in addition to Sioux Falls. - Muskegon, MI; Lawton, MN; Ambrotype, MN; Montevideo, MN; Byron, MN; Canton, Dakota; Milwaukee, WI; Canby, MN; Ishpeming, MI; Spring Grove, MN; Dalton, MN; Fergus Falls, MN; Sioux City, IA; Oxford, WI; Watson, MN; Yankton, Dakota; Windom, MN; Menomonie, WI; Sauk Center, MN; Osakis, MN. The passengers also going to Sioux Falls are as follows.

- The family of Paul I. (or Paul J.) Flornæs (49) and his wife Guhnild (Iversdatter) Flornæs (52) and their children – Iver P. (18) and Marta (9). In addition to having the same destination as Ole, they are from a community not far from Ole's residence. They are from Øvre Stjørdalen, which means

# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

that they may have attended the church at Hegra where Ole and Caroline were married. This makes me suspect that this family was known to Ole prior to the trip.<sup>xxii</sup>

- There is also a person named Oluf O. (Olsen?) Flornæs (18), who comes from the same community as the family above. Maybe he is a friend or relative of the family above.<sup>xxiii</sup>

So, my conclusion is that Ole had company that he could have been comfortable to be with on his trek to Sioux Falls!

## Ole's Trek

Ole's journey of roughly 5000 miles consisted of multiple segments, which I assume were arranged in advance with the Allan Line's booking agent. The four main segments that I have identified are Trondheim to Hull (England), Hull to Liverpool, Liverpool to Quebec City (Canada), and finally Quebec City to Sioux Falls (Dakota Territory, USA). Clearly this is a significant adventure for someone who I assume spoke only Norwegian and can not be well-to-do. I am not entirely sure of the trip's total duration, where he may have rested and eaten along the way. I assume that it was stressful, even for a person in his late 20s and even in the company of others who spoke his language. Following are some of my best guesses about the details and the evidence on which I base them.

## Trondheim to Hull

The Allan Line which operated the ship Tasso according to the emigration record was a Scottish-based company which catered at least partially to Scandinavian travelers going to America. The Tasso made multiple trips from Trondheim to Hull, and may have been operated by the Wilson Line as well. Ole's trip possibly involved a stop at Bergen on the way to Hull, but it did not take many days to arrive at Hull. Probably he was there by the weekend (07-08-May-1881). The painting at right shows the ship named the Tasso. It was built in 1852 and so was nearly 30 years old when he boarded. Ole's ship lasted until 1885 when it sank at Bergen.<sup>xxiv</sup>



Figure 10: SS Tasso

I have found no details of the trip to Hull, but there exists an account of a similar voyage about a year earlier.<sup>xxv</sup> Here is an excerpt of what Ingeborg Olsdatter Øye wrote.

“

Kristiansund 28th April.

The steamship Tasso will after what the agent says arrive at 1 o'clock tonight. We have to be ready for the arrival. It is impossible to get any sleep now in these waiting hours. I will try to use the time while I wait to write in my diary. The weather out at sea is not good. The "Pacific" which departed this morning, had to turn and come back to Kristiansund this evening. It will be a hard journey before reaching England. But the dear hope.....holds my courage up. So let it in [God's] name go! .....



# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

On Board the "Tasso" April 30, dinner time.

Now we have had a taste of what it is like to be out on the sea; and the ugly sickness has hosted most of the emigrants aboard. We departed Kristiansund at 5 o'clock this morning. The weather was all ready stormy when we left Kristiansund, and it has not become any better since. There is about 400 emigrants aboard the ship. It is a terrible mess since most of them are sick. I was a little sick crossing the "Hustadviken", but now I am quite well. I was happy to [meet another] emigrant that could speak the [english] language, we started to talk and that kept my courage up while I was feeling very sick. I think the ship now will call at Aalesund. It is so much strange to see here on the ship. If I can keep from being sick the rest of the time, I think the journey will go fine. The worst is the bad sleeping accommodations we have, so full and crowded as it is too. But thank [God] I have courage, as I am traveling to meet "my" Peder.

On board the "Tasso" in the morning of May 1st

We are now out on the North Sea, so we can not see land in any direction. The ship crew says that we will have good weather, but despite of that the ship is rolling about on the waves of the North Sea. Since dinnertime yesterday I have been free from sea sickness, and yesterday I had a "grown" supper. My sleeping accommodations were good, as there were 5 of us who slept on the deck with some blankets over us, as the bedrooms were overcrowded. It was quite fun, and though I did not sleep tight, it was a good night's sleep. Yesterday evening at 9 we left the Norwegian coast. Today it is quite busy up on deck, some are washing them selves, others are writing, in other words they are doing all kinds of different things.

May 2nd. Sunday onboard the "Tasso"

Last night I had a fairly good sleeping place, as good as one can expect on journeys like this, and which you can expect in a room overcrowded by women, men and children. I got up in the morning to get a little something to eat, namely a slice of bread and some biscuits which we receive in the morning with a cup of bad black cafe, but this made me ill, I tried to sit down in the room in front, but I had to go up on deck to be sick. I stayed up on deck after this. Here aft on the deck it is best to sit. Many of the passengers are not leaving their beds now. A Sunday morning like this they have newer experienced before many says. It is not very pleasant to day either. The wind is blowing cold and strong, and the seas washes over the deck at times. This is the third day on board since we left Kristiansund. It was said earlier that we would reach England today; but due to the strong head wind it will probably not be before tonight or tomorrow that we will arrive to Hull.

I have had fun for a while now, I have been sitting down discussing different issues with a young boy. Almost everyone aboard [is] very [clever], so good company is not hard to find. Yesterday we had a long meeting up on deck and then a long discussion about love. It has been quite amusing at times. - If only I knew that my parents were not suffering. I know they will be thinking about me now. "Tasso" is not as bad as I once thought, and if it had not been so crowded it wouldn't have been bad. The food is also better than what I had expected, yes it is irreproachable. For breakfast we get black cafe which is very bad, a biscuit with butter and a slice of bread. For dinner we get a dish of meat, which is very good. For supper we get a biscuit and a cup of tea, which is good, without cream.

Liverpool May 4th 1880, at the dinner table

Yesterday morning at 3 o'clock we approached Hull. In the evening, Sunday the 2nd we already started to get the sight of the lighthouse. It was a splendid sight, when we came up on deck in the morning, and could see Hull for our eyes. The town is a great sight, but not very beautiful after my opinion. The huge stone buildings are blackened by the smoke and dust from coal which is in the air. But huge and beautiful were all the ships we could see in the harbor.

“

# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

So from this one can guess at a few aspects of this part of Ole’s trip. - The voyage took about 3 days, the ship was crowded, the meals were passable, and many people suffered from seasickness. The trip from Hull to Liverpool took about a day.

## Hull to Liverpool

The easy assumption is that this part of the trip took place by train. The notes from Ingeborg above imply that one day she was in Hull and the next in Liverpool, so it is reasonable to assume that this part of Ole’s trip was by rail and did not last long. Probably he was there by Monday, 09-May-1881.

A few more details can be inferred from a other of references.

The situation in Hull had improved by the time that Ole appeared there. A relevant quote and an image of the waiting room that Ole may have used follow. It explains that the train ride was accomplished in just a day, so Ole and traveling companions might have arrived in Liverpool by Tuesday, 10-May-1881.

“. . . the emigrant waiting room at Paragon Railway Station was doubled in size in 1881 due to the numbers of transmigrants passing through the town. The extension provided a separate waiting room for the women and children and more extensive toilet and washing facilities than had initially been provided. . . . Most of the emigrants entering Hull travelled via the Paragon Railway Station and from there travelled to Liverpool via Leeds, Huddersfield and Stalybridge (just outside Manchester). The train tickets were part of a package that included the steamship ticket to Hull, a train ticket to Liverpool and then the steamship ticket to their final destination - mainly America. Sometimes so many emigrants arrived at one time that there would be up to 17 carriages being pulled by one steam engine. All the baggage was stored in the rear 4 carriages, with the passengers filling the carriages nearer the front of the train. The trains took precedence over all other train services because of their length and usually left Hull on a Monday morning around 11.00 a.m., arriving in Liverpool between 2.00 and 3.00pm.”<sup>xxvi</sup>



Figure 11: Paragon Railway Station

From an article by Nicholas J. Evans, published by the University of Hull (National Maritime Museum), more general details can be inferred. This confirms that was a very busy time for migration, and a trip through England was common for many.

“The purpose of this paper, and my Ph.D., is to examine those European migrants who made the decision to travel to the US and further afield indirectly via the UK. Such indirect migration represented a sizeable portion of the total number leaving Europe, particularly of those leaving the northern European countries of Finland, Germany, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden. Though 30 million European immigrants entered the US between 1836 and 1914, up to five million transmigrants, or 20 per cent of the total number of immigrants, passed through the UK. The migrants entered the UK via the eastern ports of Harwich, Hull, Grimsby, Leith, London, Newcastle and West Hartlepool. From these ports of arrival the transmigrants were then transported by train to the ports of Glasgow, Liverpool, London and Southampton, from where they could embark on the

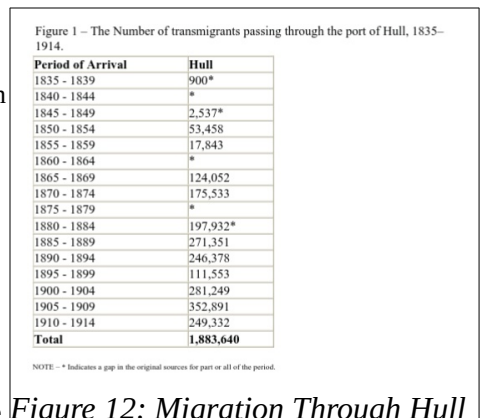


Figure 12: Migration Through Hull

# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

next stage in their journey. Though London served as the main port of entry for the millions of European immigrants entering the UK, it was the Humber ports of Hull and Grimsby that handled the majority of the transmigrants travelling via the UK - because the journey from the Humber to Liverpool was the shortest route in terms of time and distance to travel across the country. Of the five million European migrants who did arrive in the country between 1836 and 1914, over three million (or sixty per cent), did so via the Humber ports of Hull and Grimsby.”<sup>xxvii</sup>

## Liverpool to Quebec

The next departures from Liverpool to America associated with the Allan line are the SS Caspian, leaving 11-May1881, and the SS Moravian, leaving 12-May-1881.<sup>xxviii</sup> As you will see shortly, the SS Moravian, arriving 21-May-1881, is the one to choose. It’s destination is Quebec (City), Canada.

“S/S Moravian; Allan Line; departure from Liverpool; on 1881-05-12; arrive at Quebec; on 1881-05-21; Captain A[r]cher “

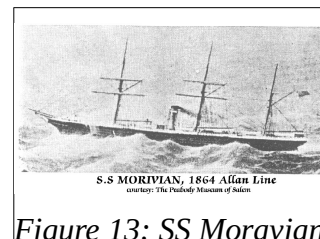


Figure 13: SS Moravian

Although it is from 1898, a flier about the Allan Line service from Liverpool to America is interesting in terms of fares as well as “dietary” information for passengers, which may not have differed much from the 1881 voyage.<sup>xxix</sup> Note that you could get gruel every night at 8 PM!



Figure 14: Allan Line Flier - heading

THE DIETARY SCALE FOR STEERAGE PASSENGERS IS AS FOLLOWS:—

<b>Sunday.</b> —BREAKFAST—7.30 a.m., Coffee, Milk and Sugar, Fresh Bread and Butter. DINNER—12 Noon, Soup, Fresh Beef, Potatoes, Plum Pudding and Sauce. TEA—5 p.m., Tea, Milk and Sugar, Bread and Butter.	<b>Monday.</b> —BREAKFAST—Coffee, Milk and Sugar, Fresh Bread and Butter. DINNER—Soup, Beef and Potatoes. TEA—Tea, Milk and Sugar, Fresh Bread and Butter.	<b>Tuesday.</b> —BREAKFAST—Oatmeal Porridge and Syrup, Coffee, Milk and Sugar, Fresh Bread and Butter. DINNER—Pea Soup, Salt Pork and Potatoes. TEA—Tea, Milk and Sugar, Fresh Bread and Butter.	<b>Wednesday.</b> —BREAKFAST—Coffee, Milk and Sugar, Fresh Bread and Butter. DINNER—Soup, Beef and Potatoes, Plum Pudding and Sauce. TEA—Tea, Milk and Sugar, Fresh Bread and Butter.	<b>Thursday.</b> —BREAKFAST—Coffee, Milk and Sugar, Fresh Bread and Butter. DINNER—Soup, Fresh Beef and Potatoes.—TEA—Tea, Milk and Sugar, Fresh Bread and Butter.	<b>Friday.</b> —BREAKFAST—Oatmeal Porridge and Syrup, Coffee, Milk and Sugar, Fresh Bread and Butter. DINNER—Pea Soup, Ling Fish and Sauce, Salt Pork and Potatoes. TEA—Tea, Milk and Sugar, Fresh Bread and Butter.	<b>Saturday.</b> —BREAKFAST—Coffee, Milk and Sugar, Fresh Bread and Butter. DINNER—Soup, Beef and Potatoes. TEA—Tea, Milk and Sugar, Fresh Bread and Butter. N.B.—Gruel at 8 o'clock every night.
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Figure 15: Allan Line - meals

The flier also indicates that the fare to Quebec in 1898 was 4£ (about 441£ or 551 USD today).<sup>xxx</sup> Information about transport once in Canada is provided as well as details of sleeping arrangements!

# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

Through Tickets at Special Rates are issued to nearly all Inland Towns in the United States and Canada, VIA THE GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY AND THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY, AND THEIR CONNECTIONS, and a substantial advantage is offered from the Ports at which this Company lands Passengers; Trains start at once from alongside the Steamers' Wharves, the Baggage being transferred without charge.

INTERMEDIATE or STEERAGE PASSAGES can be secured by payment of a Deposit of One or Two Pounds on each Berth with Name and Age of Passengers. Post-office Orders to be made payable to the undersigned.


INTERMEDIATE PASSAGE includes superior Dietary, Beds, Bedding, and all necessary Utensils, Wash-basins, &c. Berths in this class should be secured well in advance, the accommodation being limited.

STEERAGE PASSENGERS are provided with comfortable sleeping berths, and they are recommended to hire the Outfit supplied by this Company, which consists of Wood's Patent Life Preserving Pillows, Mattress, Pannikin to hold 1½ pint, Plate Knife, Nickel-plated Fork, and Nickel-plated Spoon. The charge for the use of these articles for the Voyage is 8s. 6d. per Adult, and 1s. 9d. per Child between the Ages of Two and Twelve Years; leaving Passengers to provide bed-covering only, a rug or blanket being sufficient. The hire of the articles necessary for use on board ship is recommended in preference to actual purchase, as these articles are valueless on shore.

Figure 16: Allan Line - connections in America

An 1882 flier is interesting as well and it mentions the SS Moravian, which Ole took in the preceding year.<sup>xxx1</sup>

**Steel S. S. PARISIAN, . . . 5,400 Tons (new).**

Tons.		Tons.
S. S. SARDINIAN . . . . .		S. S. CIRCASSIAN . . . . .
S. S. POLYNESIAN . . . . .		S. S. MORAVIAN . . . . .
S. S. SARMATIAN . . . . .		S. S. PERUVIAN . . . . .
4,650		4,000
4,100		3,650
3,600		3,400

These Steamships are built in water-tight compartments; are unsurpassed in strength, speed and comfort, and are fitted up with all the modern improvements that practical experience can suggest.

This Line offers the shortest possible sea route between the two continents, as two days and a half of the entire time are spent on the beautiful and picturesque River and Gulf of St. Lawrence, thus reducing the actual ocean passage, from land to land, to the minimum of but **Five Days**. This route claims, therefore, especially, the patronage of travelers suffering from sea-sickness.

Figure 17: 1882 Allan Line Flier

# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

To confirm the choice of ships and times, the manifest from the SS Moravian has been found. It shows One Ole T. Rundhaugen!<sup>xxxiii</sup> This record is very hard to read, but, in addition to Ole (number 2133), you can see the many others destined for assorted places in the upper mid-west.

1881  
 10/16  
 Moravian  
 from Liverpool  
 sailed 12 May  
 Arrived 22 May

no cabin list remains  
 from this vessel

Figure 18:  
 1881 SS  
 Moravian  
 manifest -1

**MONTREAL-OCEAN STEAMSHIP COMPANY**  
**SCHEDULE B.**  
**FORM OF PASSENGER LIST.**

Ship's Name.	Master's Name.	Tonnage or Register.	Aggregate number of special seats in the several compartments set apart for Passengers, other than Cabin Passengers.	Total number of Special Adults, exclusive of Master, Crew, and Cabin Passengers, which the Ship can legally carry.	Where
Moravia	H Archer				Quebec

I HEREBY Certify that the Provisions actually laden on board this Ship are sufficient, according to the requirements of the Passengers Act, for 50 Statute Adults, for a Voyage of 50 Days.

Date, 12<sup>th</sup> May 18 81 (Signature) \_\_\_\_\_ Master.

**NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF PASSENGERS.**  
*N.B.—Cabin Passengers must also be included in this Schedule, after the other Passengers. Sec. 5 of 26 and 27 Vict. cap. 51.*

Port of Embarkation.	Names of Passengers.	Age of each Adult of 12 years and upwards.				Children between 1 & 12 Years.		Infants.		Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passengers.	English.				Scotch.				Irish.				Foreigners.				Port at which Passengers have contracted to land.
		Married.	Single.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.		Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.					
		M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.		Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.			

Figure 19: 1881 SS Moravian Manifest -2

2133 Ole T Rundhaugen

Figure 20: 1881 SS Moravian Manifest -3

So, now we know the ship that Ole took, that he landed at Quebec (City), Canada, and we know something about his companions as well as the conditions on board the SS Moravian. Next, he would have to make his way to Sioux Falls.

# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

## Quebec to Sioux Falls

From a research point of view, this leg of the trip to Sioux Falls is the least well documented. Two possible routes suggest themselves as options – (1) Quebec City to Montreal to St. Albans (VT, USA) and then by rail to Sioux Falls, passing south to the Albany area, then west to Cleveland, Chicago, etc. via rail and (2) Quebec City to Port Huron (MI, USA) via the Grand Trunk Western Railway (GTWR)<sup>xxxiii</sup>, and then to Chicago, etc. via rail.

Unfortunately, I have not found records of entry into the US at either Port Huron or St. Albans for the required era. There is evidence that people traveled both ways, with Port Huron seeing greater traffic.<sup>xxxiv</sup> So, until something concrete is discovered, I will explain how the route through Port Huron might have gone.

For general information about Canada in 1881, there is an interesting web page with audio by Craig Baird.<sup>xxxv</sup> For a more detailed visualization of the route to Port Huron, an 1871 map from the Library of Congress is useful.<sup>xxxvi</sup> Following are a small number of excerpts from this large map.

Quebec City to Montreal: (just under 300 miles) The GTWR line is apparent.

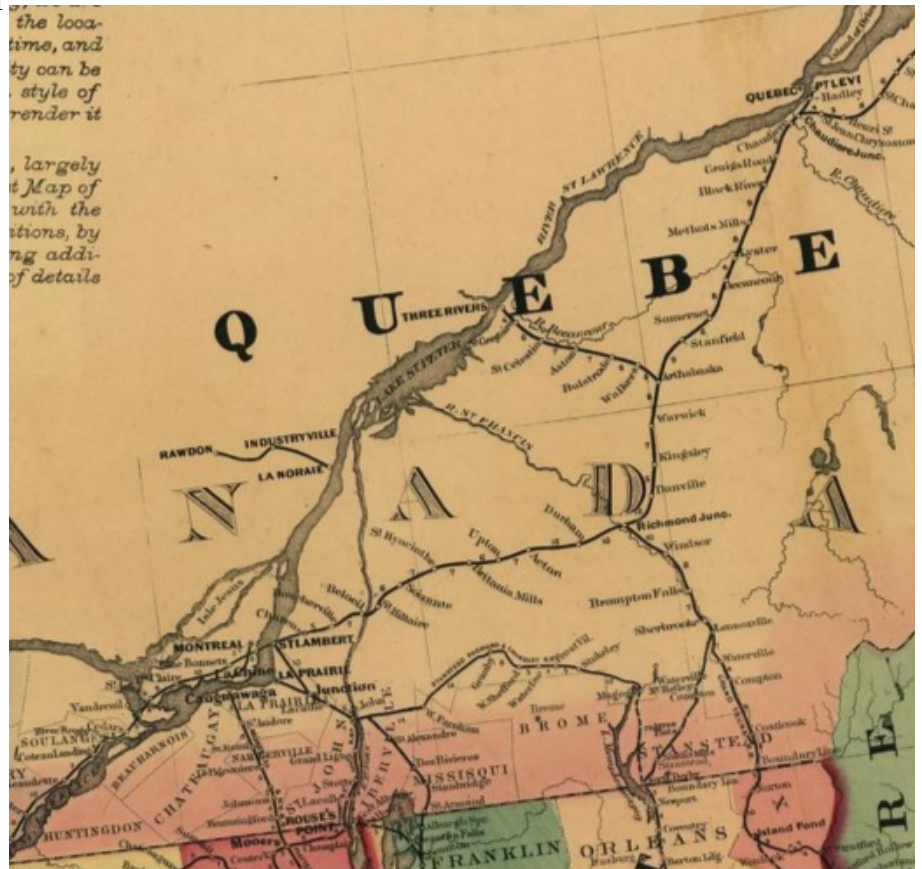


Figure 21: Quebec to Montreal - GTWR

# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

Montreal to Port Huron: (800-900 miles) The GTWR runs southwestward north of Lake Ontario and then into Port Huron.



Figure 22: Montreal to Port Huron - GTWR

In order to enter the US at Port Huron, I believe that Ole would have had to disembark the train in the city of Sarnia (across the St. Clair river from Port Huron) and use a ferry to set foot on US soil. I don't believe that a more convenient connection (a tunnel) was completed until ten years later. Here is an 1876 map that shows where the GTWR terminated and allowed access to a ferry.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

“The railway came to Sarnia in 1858. People and freight travelled by ferry across the St. Clair River at Point Edward before connecting with the railway again in Port Huron, Michigan. Loading and unloading the ferries was labour-intensive and time-consuming. The ferries battled strong currents, Great Lakes shipping traffic, poor weather, and winter ice. By the 1880s there was a continuous backlog of freight in the Point Edward yard.”<sup>xxxviii</sup>

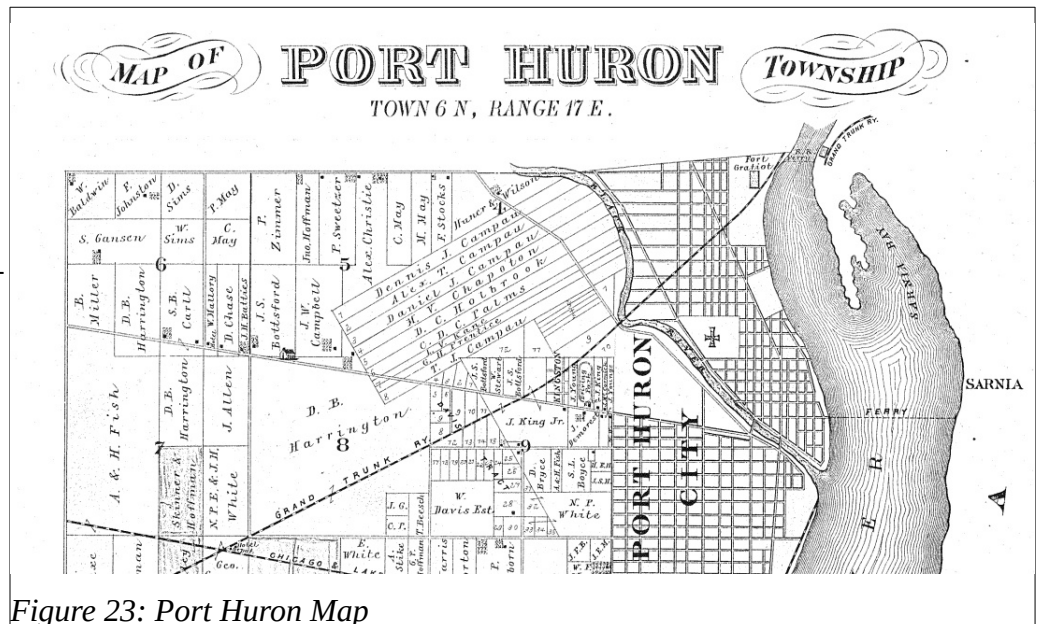


Figure 23: Port Huron Map

# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

Port Huron to Chicago: (about 350 miles) There appear to be multiple paths between the two cities. The one through Pontiac would probably have been the shortest route. At the end of this segment, he was probably in the biggest and busiest city that he had ever seen.<sup>xxxix</sup>



Figure 24: Port Huron to Chicago

Chicago to Sioux Falls: (about 500-600 miles) Note that the 1871 map shows no railroads into Sioux Falls. These were not completed until roughly 1881 – the year of Ole’s arrival. However, I assume that he did travel by rail directly into Sioux Falls. If this is not true, he would have had to travel to Omaha or Sioux City and then find his way north to Sioux Falls.

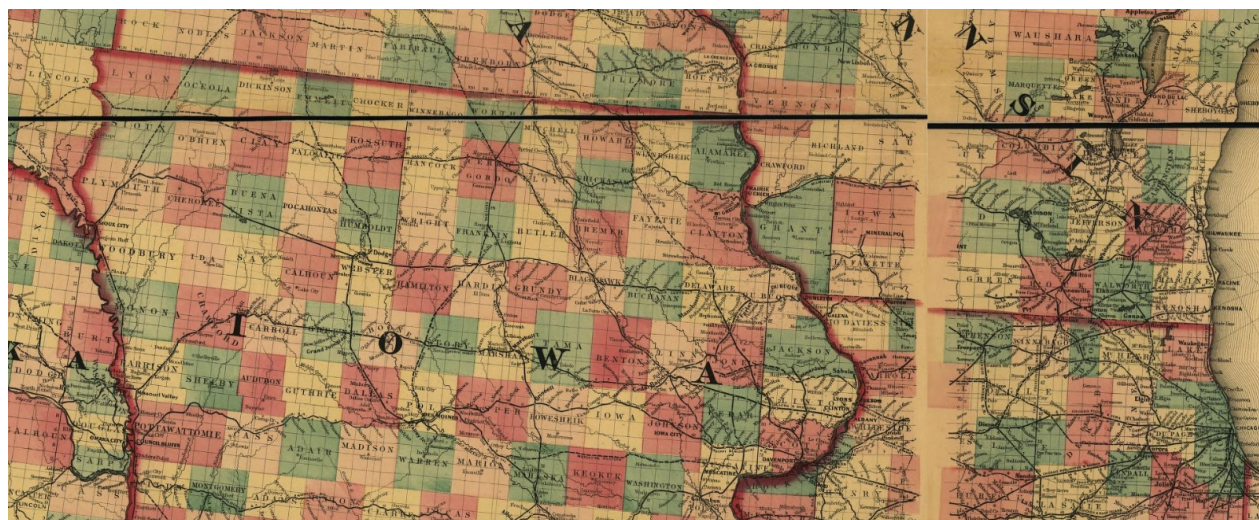
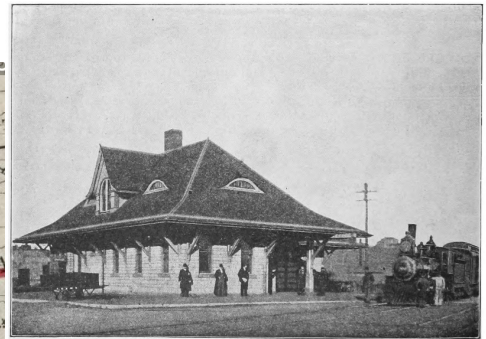
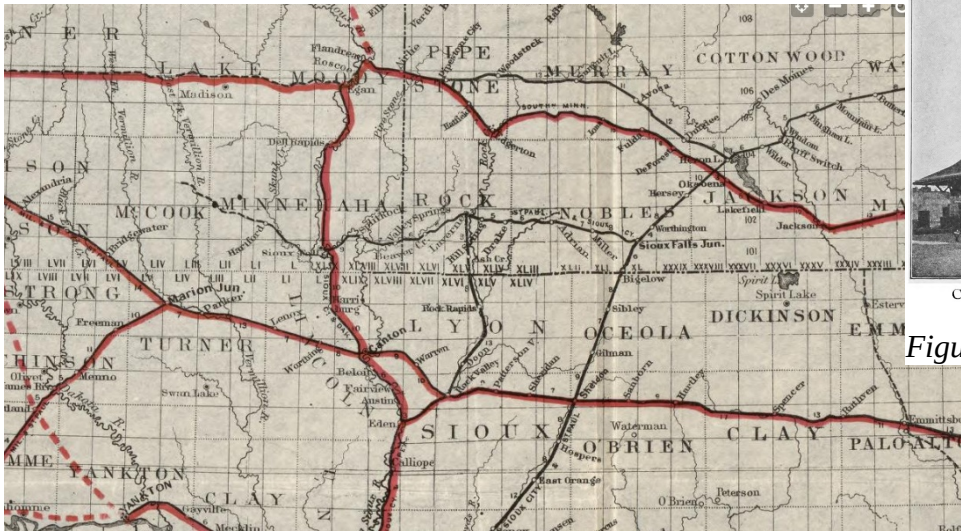


Figure 25: Chicago to Sioux Falls



# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

Referring back to the previous map of Sioux Falls from 1881, there are two railroads to choose from - the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul RR (station pictured below<sup>xi</sup>) and the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Omaha RR. Following is a map showing some routes from Chicago to Sioux Falls in 1881 for the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul RR, which is the one that I favor since it is the most direct.<sup>xii</sup> Note that it runs into Turner Co., Dakota, which is where family lore says that he worked as a shoe maker (in the town of Centerville). Centerville is about 40 miles from Sioux Falls.



CHICAGO, MILWAUKEE AND ST. PAUL PASSENGER DEPOT.

Figure 26: Sioux Falls Depot

Figure 27: Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul RR map

In total, Ole would have covered about 2300 miles between Quebec City and Sioux Falls. Perhaps this took as long as one to two weeks. I estimate that he arrived in Sioux Falls between 5/29 and 6/5/1881, just about a month after his departure from Trondheim.

# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

## After Sioux Falls

Following is some information about the lives of Ole and Caroline after Ole's arrival in Sioux Falls in 1881.

## Caroline's Journey

As mentioned earlier, when Ole left Norway, Caroline was pregnant. She gave birth to a son named Ole in July, 1881, apparently while still in the Molsknaes community.<sup>xiii</sup> I assume, but I can not prove, that she had support from one or more family members or friends while there. Following are relevant images. Perhaps there are some hints in the notes associated with the baptismal record.



Figure 28: Birth of Ole Olsen - 1

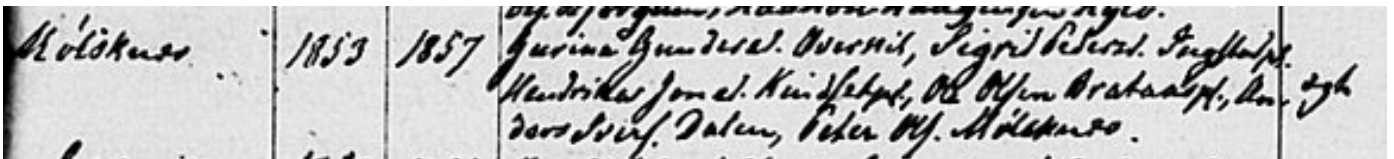


Figure 29: Birth of Ole Olsen - 2

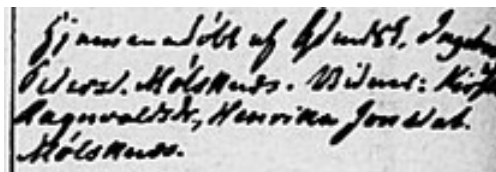


Figure 30: Birth of Ole Olsen - 3

Caroline and her infant stayed in Norway until early November, when they appear in Norwegian emigration records.<sup>xliii</sup> They are headed for Sioux Falls, just like Ole. Unfortunately, I have not found any details of her journey to Sioux Falls, except for the name of the ship (SS Hero) taken on the first leg from Trondheim to Hull. This must have been a difficult adventure for Caroline and son. And I wonder if the son did not survive the voyage since he does not appear in any records that I have found in the USA. He is alluded to in the 1900 Federal Census,<sup>xliv</sup> but that along with his birth and emigration records are the only trace that I have of him. (Note: Caroline's birth year is wrong in this census.<sup>xlv</sup>)

Thamron Ole	Head	W.M.	Dec 1853	46	1881	
Carolina	Wife	W.F.	Jan 1854	46	1881	5-4

Figure 31: 1900 Federal Census - Potter Co., SD

# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

Following are what few details of Caroline's voyage that I have found. The ship taken on the voyage to Hull was the SS Hero, about which information exists.<sup>xlvi</sup> Again, unfortunately, I have not found a record of who Caroline's fellow passengers were. Her departure probably took her through Bergen, leaving Trondheim on 03-November-1881.<sup>xlvii</sup> Arrival in Liverpool based on Ole's trip would have been on about the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> of November. Options out of Liverpool then are just two – both with Halifax as a destination instead of Quebec. One (SS Nova Scotian) left on 08-November and arrived 20-November; the other (SS Circassian) left 10-November and arrived 21-November.<sup>xlviii</sup> From there, her journey is even more speculative because I have not found her in any ship manifest. It seems that it was possible to take a rail line from Halifax to Quebec City in 1881, or she may have continued on a different ship from Halifax to Boston.<sup>xlix</sup> It is also possible that there are lost records or ones that I have missed that show Caroline traveling directly to Quebec City by ship as Ole did. Until more information is available, it is unreasonable to speculate much about her route. And, there is the question about the survival of her son, Ole. At first glance, it appears to me that her journey may have been more lengthy and tiring than Ole's.



Figure 32: SS Hero

## Time in Centerville (SD)

Family lore has it that Ole worked as a shoemaker in Centerville after arrival in Dakota. This village is not far to the southwest from Sioux Falls. So far I have found no confirming evidence of the time there. Family lore also indicates that Ole and Caroline made their way to Potter County, SD, in 1883. Ole's tenure in Centerville must have been short.

# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

## Life in Potter County (SD)

Ole and Caroline homesteaded in Potter County on land just to the west of the town of Hoven. The land patents for parts of sections 8 and 17 of twp 120N 75W can be found with the BLM.<sup>1</sup> The patents are shown below along with a map showing the location of the one dated 1888.




Image	Accession	Names	Date	Doc #	State	Meridian	Twp - Rng	Allquots	Sec. #	County
	<a href="#">SD0460_291</a>	THOMPSON, OLE	4/13/1888	14181	SD	5th PM	120N - 075W	SE¼	8	Potter
	<a href="#">SD0640_009</a>	THOMPSON, OLE	7/23/1891	16942	SD	5th PM	120N - 075W	NE¼	17	Potter
	<a href="#">SD2290_442</a>	THOMPSON, OLE	6/18/1901	2739	SD	5th PM	120N - 075W	NW¼	17	Potter

Figure 33: BLM Land Patents -1

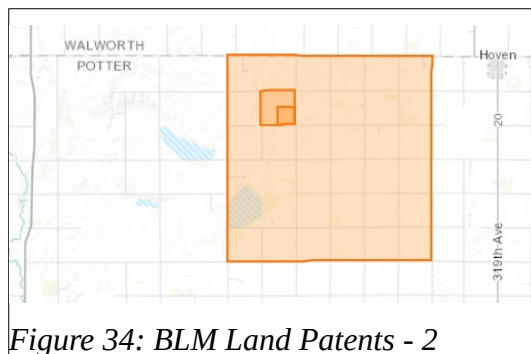


Figure 34: BLM Land Patents - 2

# Ole Goes to Sioux Falls

They also raised a family consisting of three daughters and one son. A summary of the family follows.

- Anna b.1888 d.1909<sup>li</sup>
- Tena b.1890 d.1979 (my grandmother)<sup>lii</sup>
- Matilda b.1892 d.1937 <sup>liii</sup>
- Oscar b.1895 d. 1968<sup>liv</sup>

A picture of the family taken around 1910 follows. It includes an image of Ed Olsen, Caroline's nephew.



Figure 35: The Thompson/Olsen Family c.1910

For more information about the family, you can visit

[https://281connections.us/281connections\\_Wiki/South\\_Dakota\\_Families/Thompson-Olsen.html](https://281connections.us/281connections_Wiki/South_Dakota_Families/Thompson-Olsen.html)

## Acknowledgments

I am grateful that various people have helped and encouraged me along the way. The following warrant special note.

- Gary Romsaas has provided some significant assistance in traversing Norwegian records as well as hard to read passenger lists.
- Sharold Hipfner has provided significant encouragement that helped me overcome my reticence to tackle Norwegian records.
- The Westside Genealogy Group has provided me encouragement as well as a forum where I can present ideas. <https://groups.io/g/Westside-Genealogy-Group>

## Endnotes

- i Ole is known by various names: Ole Thorsen Prestegaard, Ole Thorsen Rundhaugen, Ole Thorsen Molsknes, and last but not least Ole Thompson in Dakota Territory.
- ii Vågå prestekontor, AV/SAH-PREST-076/H/Ha/Haa/L0005: Parish register (official) no. 5 /1, 1842-1856, p. 324; Quick link: <https://www.digitalarkivet.no/kb20070130640332>
- iii "South Dakota, Grave Registration Records, 1939-1942", , FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:WC7K-4G6Z> : Sat Mar 09 08:59:57 UTC 2024), Entry for Ole Thompson and Caroline Thompson.
- iv Calendar source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1881\\_calendar\\_-\\_Clark's\\_Mile-End\\_24\\_Spool\\_Cotton\\_\(back\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1881_calendar_-_Clark's_Mile-End_24_Spool_Cotton_(back).jpg) Boston Public Library, CC BY 2.0 , via Wikimedia Commons
- v Trondheim Harbor painting: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Christian\\_Eggen\\_-\\_Fra\\_Ravnkloa\\_-\\_TKM-42-1893\\_-\\_Trondheim\\_kunstmuseum.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Christian_Eggen_-_Fra_Ravnkloa_-_TKM-42-1893_-_Trondheim_kunstmuseum.jpg) Christian Eggen , Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons
- vi History of Sioux Falls: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Sioux\\_Falls,\\_South\\_Dakota](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Sioux_Falls,_South_Dakota)
- vii 1881 Map of Sioux Falls: <https://tedsvintageart.com/products/sioux-falls-south-dakota-vintage-map-1881-birds-eye-view-of-the-city/>
- viii Trondheim Climate: <https://www.climatestotravel.com/climate/norway/trondheim>
- ix Atlantic Ice: <https://newicedata.com/charts-1881/> ; Trondheim Sea Temperatures: <https://www.seatemperature.org/europe/norway/trondheim.htm>
- x Montreal Temperatures: <https://montreal.weatherstats.ca/metrics/temperature.html>
- xi Sioux Falls Weather: <https://www.weather.gov/fsd/>
- xii Winter of 1880-81: *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society; The Long Winter of 1880/81*, Barbara Mayes Boustead, Martha D. Shulski, and Steven D. Hilberg; Online Publication: 19 Jun 2020; Print Publication: 01 Jun 2020; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1175/BAMS-D-19-0014.1> ; Page(s): E797–E813 . Also, see <https://www.3newsnow.com/weather/weather-history/winter-1880-1881-the-real-story-of-the-long-winter> .
- xiii NWS Sioux Falls Station History: <https://www.weather.gov/fsd/fsdstationhistory>
- xiv See for example, *South Dakota History Journal*, volume 15, number 1, *The Enduring Frontier: The Impact of Weather on South Dakota History and Literature*, by Richard Maxwell Brown; <https://www.sdhspress.com/journal/south-dakota-history-15-1/the-enduring-frontier-the-impact-of-weather-on-south-dakota-history-and-literature/vol-15-no-1-and-no-2-the-enduring-frontier.pdf>
- xv Newspaper Article about 1881 drought: [https://www.wlfi.com/news/local-weather-history-the-1881-heat-drought-with-massive-great-lakes-fires-smoke-in-september/article\\_20e724b6-3e09-11ed-b7e8-c3a2d1d9267d.html](https://www.wlfi.com/news/local-weather-history-the-1881-heat-drought-with-massive-great-lakes-fires-smoke-in-september/article_20e724b6-3e09-11ed-b7e8-c3a2d1d9267d.html)
- xvi Come to God's Country article from the SD Historical Press: <https://www.sdhspress.com/journal/south-dakota-history-10-4/come-to-gods-country-promotional-efforts-in-dakota-territory-1861-1889/vol-10-no-4-come-to-gods-country.pdf>
- xvii "Norway, Church Books, 1797-1958", , FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:6875-Y2F7> : Mon Jan 13 14:49:12 UTC 2025), Entry for Ole Thorsen Rundhaug and Thor Olsen Lyeneie, 1 May 1881. Also <https://www.digitalarkivet.no/en/view/327/pv00000002828497> . An image of the Hegra church by Cato Edvardsen, CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons, is here [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hegra\\_kirke\\_01.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hegra_kirke_01.jpg) .
- xviii A map contemporary showing Molsknes can be found here – <https://maps.app.goo.gl/mVG4NbnH25Ezwwyg6> .
- xix Hegra Church image: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hegra\\_kirke.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hegra_kirke.jpg) Henny stokseth, CC BY-SA 3.0 NO , via Wikimedia Commons
- xx See <https://www.digitalarkivet.no/en/view/255/pd00000013876515> and Ministerialprotokoller, klokkebøker og fødselsregistre - Nord-Trøndelag, AV/SAT-A-1458/703/L0030: Ministerialbok nr. 703A03, 1880-1892, s. 10; Brukslenke for sidevisning: <https://www.digitalarkivet.no/kb20070423690106> .
- xxi 1881 Emigration - See <https://www.digitalarkivet.no/en/view/8/pe0000000067125> .
- xxii Emigration of Paul J. Flornaes Family: <https://www.digitalarkivet.no/en/view/9/og0000000067126>
- xxiii Emigration of Oluf O Flornaes: <https://www.digitalarkivet.no/en/view/9/og0000000067124>
- xxiv The SS Tasso built in 1852: [https://www.norwayheritage.com/p\\_ship.asp?sh=tasso](https://www.norwayheritage.com/p_ship.asp?sh=tasso) ; and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Wilson\\_Sons\\_%26\\_Co.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Wilson_Sons_%26_Co.)
- xxv 1880 account of trip from Trondheim to Hull: <https://www.norwayheritage.com/articles/templates/voyages.asp?articleid=76&zoneid=6>
- xxvi Hull facilities: <https://www.norwayheritage.com/articles/templates/voyages.asp?articleid=28&zoneid=6>
- xxvii University of Hull article: Evans, N. J. (2001). Work in progress: Indirect passage from Europe Transmigration via the UK, 1836–1914. *Journal for Maritime Research*, 3(1), 70–84. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21533369.2001.9668313>
- xxviii May, 1881, departures/arrivals reported in Norwegian newspapers: [https://www.norwayheritage.com/t\\_transatlantic.asp?month=05&year=1881](https://www.norwayheritage.com/t_transatlantic.asp?month=05&year=1881) ; image of SS Moravian -

## Endnotes

- <https://dymndlady0.tripod.com/moravian.html> ; log of sailings: [https://www.norwayheritage.com/p\\_ship.asp?sh=moraw](https://www.norwayheritage.com/p_ship.asp?sh=moraw)
- xxix 1890s Allen Line flier - <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Allan-Line-Fares-List-1890s.JPG> Bjørn Christian Tørrissen, CC BY-SA 3.0 , via Wikimedia Commons
- xxx Bank of England calculator: <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>
- xxxii 1882 Flier - Allan Line - [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1882\\_Allan\\_Line\\_steamships.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1882_Allan_Line_steamships.png) Palmer, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons
- xxxiii Ole appears on the Moravian from Liverpool to Quebec! (Thank you Gary Romsaas for finding this!) See <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/immigration-records/passenger-lists/passenger-lists-1865-1922/Pages/item.aspx?IdNumber=1749&> , image 13.
- xxxiiii GTWR history: <http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/quebechistory/encyclopedia/GrandTrunkRailway.htm>
- xxxv Port Huron Times Herald editorial about immigration: <https://www.thetimesherald.com/story/opinion/editorials/2017/02/03/city-needs-memorial-role-immigration/97461828/>
- xxxvi Craig Baird website: <https://canadaehx.com/2022/10/13/canada-a-yearly-journey-1881/>
- xxxvii Colton's railroad and commercial map of the US and Canada, 1871: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3700.r000510/?r=0.828,0.045,0.069,0.038,0>
- xxxviii St. Claire County Library map of Port Huron (1876 atlas, part 2): [https://stclaircountylibrary.org/content/download/3390/41458/version/1/file/StClairCountyPlatAtlas1876\\_Part2Compressed.pdf](https://stclaircountylibrary.org/content/download/3390/41458/version/1/file/StClairCountyPlatAtlas1876_Part2Compressed.pdf)
- xxxix St. Clair Tunnel history: <https://www.lambtonmuseums.ca/en/lambton-heritage-museum/a-tale-of-two-tunnels-the-st-clair-tunnel.aspx>
- xl Chicago Union Station images from 1885: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chicago\\_Union\\_Station\\_C%26A.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chicago_Union_Station_C%26A.jpg)
- xli History of Minnehaha County, D.R. Bailey, 1899, Brown & Saenger, Sioux Falls, p. 150. ; also, History of Southeastern Dakota, 1881, Sioux City, Iowa, Western Publishing Company, pp. 170-190. – both available on Google books.
- xlii Rail routes from Chicago to Sioux Falls in 1881 (map - Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railway Company): <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g4061p.r003780>
- xliii Birth of Ole Olsen in 1881: <https://www.digitalarkivet.no/en/view/255/pd00000013876515> and <https://media.digitalarkivet.no/view/6619/11>
- xliv Emigration records for Caroline and Ole (1881): (Caroline) <https://www.digitalarkivet.no/en/view/8/pe00000000071798> and (Ole) <https://www.digitalarkivet.no/en/view/8/pe00000000071798>
- xlv 1900 Federal Census showing Thompson family. There are four children listed, but Caroline indicates that she has had five. - "United States, Census, 1900", , *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MMRD-X7K> : Thu Dec 26 21:36:58 UTC 2024), Entry for Ole Thompson and Carolina Thompson, 1900.
- xlv Birth/baptism for Caroline: Line number 21 at Nord-Trøndelag county, Øvre Stjørdal (Hegra) in Øvre Stjørdal, Parish register (official) no. 703A01 (1850-1862), Born and baptised 1857, Page 42 Quick link: <https://www.digitalarkivet.no/kb20050511010777>
- xlvi Information about the SS Hero: <https://www.norwayheritage.com/gallery/gallery.asp?action=viewimage&categoryid=&text=hero&imageid=15&box=&shownew=>
- xlvii Departure of the SS Hero from Trondheim in 1881: [https://www.norwayheritage.com/p\\_ship.asp?sh=hero1](https://www.norwayheritage.com/p_ship.asp?sh=hero1)
- xlviii Liverpool to Canada possibilities for Caroline: [https://www.norwayheritage.com/t\\_corresp.asp?id=6668](https://www.norwayheritage.com/t_corresp.asp?id=6668)
- xlix Information about travel options from Halifax: (by ship) <https://www.ggarchives.com/SteamshipLines/AllanLine/> ; (by rail) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maritime\\_Express](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maritime_Express)
- l Land patents: <https://gloreCORDS.blm.gov/results/default.aspx?searchCriteria=type=patent|st=SD|cty=107|ln=thompson|fn=ole|sp=true|sw=true|sadv=false>
- li Anna Thompson information: <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/L444-7HM>
- lii Tena Thompson information: <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/L444-W8P>
- liii Matilda Thompson information: <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/L444-WG2>
- liv Oscar Thompson information: <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/LRKK-3B7>