

## Rev. J. W. C. Dietrichson

### Elling Eielsen, 1940 OM Norlie

Three church buildings have contended for the honor of being the oldest among the Norwegian-American Lutherans. These are: East Koshkonong, at Cambridge, Wis., Muskego, or Norway, at Norway, Wis., and Fox River, or Norway, at Norway, Ill. The East Koshkonong church, and its mate, the West Koshkonong church, were erected in 1844 by Rev. J. W. C. Dietrichson, the third Norwegian Lutheran pastor in America. The Muskego church, built by C. L. Clausen, the second Norwegian Lutheran pastor, was started and finished in 1844, started earlier than the Koshkonong churches, but dedicated later, and is now generally accepted as the oldest Norwegian church. But the one that was built at Norway, Ill, by Elling Eielsen, the first Norwegian Lutheran pastor in America, was at least four years older than the Muskego church building.



A number of writers do not give Elling Eielsen the credit of being the first Norwegian Lutheran pastor in America. In fact, some have never admitted that he was a pastor. Unonius, for example, held that J. W. C. Dietrichson was the first Norwegian Lutheran pastor here.

Clausen and Dietrichson have their names as a joint caption, for they were the first ones to cross swords with Eielsen, but by no means the last or the worst. Clausen and Dietrichson were young men when they came. Clausen was 23, Dietrichson was 29. both of them untried, while Eielsen was considerably older, with much more Biblical knowledge and pastoral experience. Just what they did not like in each other is hard to say truthfully. Clausen wrote in his "Day Book" that Eielsen lived a "lustful life and created confusion and misery." Dietrichson wrote a great deal more, including that Eielsen was a false teacher, deceiving the believers, that he was a backbiter and a liar, etc. The deepest reason why Clausen and Dietrichson clashed with Eielsen was expressed by Eielsen to Clausen at their first meeting. He said: "You are of a different spirit."

### A history of the Norwegians of Illinois (1905)

The first congregation in Capron was started in 1844 by Rev. J. W. C. Dietrichson, who was born at Fredriksstad, Norway, April 4, 1815, and died at Copenhagen, Denmark, from a stroke of paralysis, Nov. 14, 1883. His remains were taken to Norway and buried at Porsgrund, 1883. He was educated and ordained for the ministry in Norway. A dyer by the name of P. S0rensen in Christiania induced Mr. Dietrichson to come to America and preach the gospel for his countrymen.

It is said that he was encouraged not only by words but also with a snug sum of money for the mission. He finally concluded to accept, and with this in view he was ordained in the Oslo Church by the bishop of Christiania stift, 1844.

He arrived in Milwaukee, Aug. 5, 1844, and from there went first to Muskego, and\_ in the last days of August, 1844, he arrived in Koshkonong prairie, where he held service in a barn.

The church in the neighborhood of Capron, 111., was the second house of worship to be started by Dietrichson, but was completed first, and was dedicated Dec. 19, 1844. The other one was in Wisconsin in the town of Christiana. Elling Eielsen had, however, built a "meeting house" in the Fox River Settlement in 1842.

Rev. Dietrichson was an ardent Christian missionary, full of energy and pluck, but was lacking in that most important Christian virtue, forbearance.

He often lost his mental equipoise. It must, however, be taken into consideration that he was brought up and educated, as were most of his confreres in the old country, to look down on the farmers as an inferior race that could be and was disciplined to obey without asking questions.

That kind of despotism is still partly prevailing in the country parishes of Europe. When the farmers have breathed the exhilarating air of this free country they must be treated differently, as Dietrichson soon found out.



We will cite some instances illustrating the case in question. In one of his flocks he had a farmer by the name of Funkelien, who was one of those foolish and irritating individuals that consider it great fun to embarrass their pastors by asking them to solve scriptural conundrums or explain apparent contradictions. He was well read in the Scriptures and in constant controversy with Dietrichson, who finally became so impatient with him that he told him he was excommunicated from his church and forbidden to appear at the service. When Funkelien, nevertheless, attended the church on the following Sunday, Dietrichson called on the men present to eject him, and when he found them hesitating, remaining in their seats, his ire knew no bounds, and he rushed down from the pulpit to throw Funkelien out with his

own hands. Funkelien, however, nothing daunted, met force with force, and a lively fight ensued. Of this Dietrichson, being the heavier man, got the better, and succeeded in ejecting his obstreperous adversary. The latter had his energetic shepherd arrested, and Dietrichson was fined for disorderly conduct and battery. Another newcomer had sent his wife to Dietrichson on some errand, at which he took offense. He grasped her so hard by the arm in order to shove her out through the door that his fingers left blue marks. For this he was arrested and fined \$50.

This goes to show not only that Dietrichson believed in the "church militant" but also that the "ecclesiastical strife" among the Norwegians of America commenced at an early period of their history.

In Capron our enterprising countryman, Ex-Alderman A. J. Olson of Woodstock and Chicago, has bought and renovated a factory for the exploiting of milk products. The farmers in the surrounding country will here have a good and steady market for their milk, so it is presumed that they will devote their attention to the raising of milch-cows.

During the interim that elapsed between the first settlement in the Northwest in 1834 and the coming of the pioneer clergyman, J. W. C. Dietrichson, the religious instruction had been meagre and unorganized. In most cases that ideal condition existed where every father is priest in his own household. Under these circumstances the logical development was that certain laymen would feel themselves called upon to minister to their brethren. Among those who assumed this work in the different settlements are mentioned; Ole Hetletveit, Jorgen Peterson, Bjjzirn Hatlestad,

Ole O. Omdal, Endre and Herman Osmundson Aaragerbae, Kleng Skaar, Even Heg, Aslak Aar, Peder AsbjOrnson Mehus, John Brakestad and Knu'd Peterson. None of these, however, attained such general importance in the early pioneer religious life as Erling Egilson Sunven or as he is more generally known Elling Eielsen, who came to America in 1839. He was born in Voss and exhibited very early in life an intensely religious character. While yet young he began to travel about as a lay preacher and gained quite a reputation as an earnest, forceful speaker. At the age of 35 he emigrated to America and four years after his arrival was ordained to the ministry by Rev. F. A. Hoffman of Duncan's Grove, 111., and labored ceaselessly as such among his countrymen. Until his death in 1883 he continued to be an important factor in the history of the Norwegian church of America.

These were all laymen whose education was of the most meager description. It is said of Eielsen that he could not write. Many of them, however, were well versed in their Bibles.

The first regular Norwegian Lutheran Congregation to be organized in America was at Muskego, Wis., in 1843. Rev. J. W. C. Dietrichson tells of the events connected with its organization in his book, "Travels among the Norwegian Immigrants."

## History of the Norwegian people in America (1922)

### Rock County

In this county many of the great Norwegians of America have been nurtured ; many of the most vital historical events have there taken place. The first three Norwegian Lutheran pastors in America—Eielsen, Clausen and Dietrichson—each lived and labored in this county at about the same time. Three synods first saw the light of day in this county—the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Eielsen Synod), 1846; the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Norwegian Synod), 1851; and the Scandinavian Augustana Synod, 1860.

Here at Koshkonong lived Rev. Johannes W. C. Dietrichson, the first preacher ordained in Norway, who came here to serve his countrymen as pastor. He came in 1844, organized ten congregations, returned to Norway in 1845 to get more help, then came back to Koshkonong, 1846-1850. In 1846 he wrote a book about his experiences in America. His successors in the pastorate, A. C. Preus, 1850-1860, and J. A. Ottesen, 1860-1885, were learned, stalwart, zealous men, who left a deep impress on that neighborhood. A word or two about a few of these pastors: Claus Lauritz Clausen was a Dane, born Nov. 3, 1820, at Aero7, Fyen. He had studied business, law and theology, but was not a graduate from any school. He had wanted to go to Zululand as a missionary, took to lay preaching, went to Norway, received a call to come to America as parochial teacher, and came. Shortly after his arrival he was examined by Rev. L. F. E. Krause of the Buffalo Synod and ordained at the wish of the Muskego Congregation. He lived at Muskego ; Eielsen was his neighbor at North Cape. They often met, but they could not exactly agree. They agreed to disagree. Eielsen was too extreme. When Dietrichson, a high church extremist, arrived in 1844, Clausen joined him, although at heart he was really a broad churchman.

Johannes Wilhelm Christian Dietrichson was 31 years old when he came to America as a missionary among his people who were literally scattered as sheep without a shepherd. He was a disciple of Bishop N. F. S. Grundtvig and succeeded in swinging Clausen over to his views. A zealous man he was, with a firm hand, and a mighty exponent of the high church view. He had great respect for the office of the ministry and performed his official duties with authority and in full regalia. U. V. Koren said of him: 'There is in the 'Ordinance of Christian the Third' a rule, saying that 'Pastors shall always be dressed in the proper vestments.' Dietrichson observed this command literally, and it is related of him that, even when he hauled wood, water or other stuff, he was clad in his long preacher's gown and with a clerical ruff about his neck." Eielsen, on the other hand, did not use any uniform to distinguish him from others. He was terrified at Dietrichson's high church manners and especially his Grundtvigian doctrines. Grundtvig was a Danish reformer who had awakened the Danish Church out of a rationalistic sleep, but he himself had promulgated some heresies. He strangely declared the Apostles' Creed to be the living Word and the Bible to be a dead word and that there was a possibility for conversion and salvation after death. Eielsen declared war on Dietrichson and Dietrichson on Eielsen. "With Dietrichson's arrival," declares Norelius, "commenced the great church war, which has raged among the Norwegians up to the present time." Dietrichson made a trip to Norway in 1845 to get more men to come to his assistance. He and Clausen could by no means serve the multiplying and growing settlements. In 1850 he returned to Norway for good, where he labored as pastor until 1874, and then as postmaster until 1882.

Dietrichson was a worthy exponent of the high church view, a Christian man with both knowledge and zeal. He shared pioneer life with his people without a murmur. He preached his first sermon at Amund Anderson's barn in East Koshkonong on August 30, 1844, and his second service he held under a large oak tree on Knud Aslakson's farm in West Koshkonong. He wanted cleancut rules to go by ; his aim was to transplant the Norwegian Lutheran Church to American soil. He was a good husbandman.

Pastoral calls were extended to Jo'rgen Pedersen in 1836 by the Fox River Lutherans; to Ole Heier, in 1837. Ole Nattesta, on behalf of the Jefferson Prairie Lutherans, Congregations, sent a letter of call to Norway in 1839. Elling 1825-1860 Eielsen was called in 1843 at Fox River, although he had previously served the Lutherans there four years and had built them a church there in 1841. C. L. Clausen was called to serve Muskego in 1843. J. W. C. Dietrichson tells in his book on the settlements ("Reiser blandt the norske Emigranter") just how he proceeded to organize the congregations at Koshkonong in 1844. These were the first attempts at gathering the Norwegians into organized congregations and securing regular pastoral care. The following is a list of the congregations organized

before 1850. There were also preaching stations, but they are not included. For a description of the congregations see "Norsk Lutherske Menigheter i Amerika, 1843-1916".

Dietrichson, J. W. C.

"Reise blandt de Norske  
Emigranter i de Forenede  
Nordamerikanske Stater"

1846 Stavanger

Dietrichson was the first State Church pastor from Norway to the Norwegian colonies. He writes about his journeys in and out among his countrymen and his efforts to establish congregations and bring order out of apparent religious chaos.

#### Slooper Book, 1961 Rosdail

Late in 1811; Gudmund Haugas and Canute Peterson visited Koshkonong, in Wisconsin, Here the university-trained, high church Lutheran, J. W. C. Dietrichson, entertained them, but publicly denounced their doctrine. Dietrichson returned their visit the following spring and called at Gudmund's home. Here he saw above the sofa a facsimile of the golden tablets, whose existence had been revealed to Joseph Smith by the angel Moroni, and from which the Prophet had translated the Book of Mormon, Dietrichson reported the writing was a strange mixture of Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, and characters like Chinese so that it was impossible to make out a single word. He called a meeting of his own on the Uth Sunday after Easter. When he completed his sermon, Gudmund arose and said: "I desire to say a few words concerning the things the minister has uttered, if the audience will stop a moment; at least I suppose the minister will stop". Dietrichson did not stop.

On May 10, 1815, in a letter to Norway, Dietrichson reported on religion in Fox River:

The situation here surely demonstrates what happens to the poor immigrant in religious matters when no aid comes from the fatherland.

The confusion here is terrible. Our dear countrymen, baptized and confirmed in the faith of our fathers, are here divided into seven or eight different sects. About 80 belong to the Mormon sect. Others are Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers, and followers of Elling Eielsen ...

#### The first chapter of Norwegian immigration (1821-1840) its causes and results (1895)

Knud Peterson was one of the seventy disciples of the church of Latter Day Saints, who, as an Evangelist, -did service as an itinerant preacher. Gudmund Haugaas and Knud Peterson visited Koshkonong while Dietrichson was pastor there. They were well treated by Dietrichson at his house. This Knud Peterson I have been able to trace, as will be seen, in an earlier part of this volume.

Having learned that Sarah, the daughter of a slooper, was the wife of the bishop of Ephraim, and that Bishop Canute Peterson was the same person as Knud Peterson, who, in company with Gudmund Haugaas, proclaimed Mormonism on our dear old Koshkonong, and was entertained by Rev. Dietrichson in 1845, I concluded that he, too, must be one of our pioneers to be sketched in this volume, and accordingly I wrote to his wife for more information in regard to his life. In reply I received the following interesting letter dated March 9, 1895. It throws much light upon the work done by the Mormons among the Scandinavians.

J. W. C. Dietrichson.

Then came Rev. J. W. C. Dietrichson, from Norway. He was the first Norwegian Lutheran minister in this country who had been regularly educated at the university of Norway, and regularly ordained by a Norwegian bishop. Johannes Wilhelm Christian Dietrichson was born at Fredrikstad, Norway, April 4, 1815, and died at Copenhagen, Denmark, from a stroke of paralysis, November 11, 1883. He was buried at Porsgrund, November 28, 1883.

A dyer by name P. Sorenson in Christiania, Norway, induced Mr. Dietrichson to go as a minister to his countrymen in America. Mr. Sorenson encouraged him not only with words, but also with a sum of money for the mission. After some hesitation, Dietrichson finally consented, and with a view of going to America, he was ordained in the Oslo church by the bishop of Christiania Stift, February 26, 1844.

On the 16th of May, 1844, he went on board the brig "Washington," in Langesund, Captain H. Smith commanding. This ship was loaded with iron and emigrants, and bound for New York, and on May 21st, the wind permitted the captain to weigh anchor. There were in all, 112 persons on board, including the sailors.

Mr. Dietrichson acted as chaplain during the voyage. He also taught the children, so that on this occasion, the emigrants had both church and school. They landed in New York, July 9.

In New York, Dietrichson preached twice for Norwegians, Swedes and Danes, the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity, and the following Sunday.

He landed in Milwaukee, August 5, 1844. From Milwaukee he went on to Muskego, where he stopped a short time with Kev. C. L. Clausen, whose ordination he recognized as regular, in every respect.

On one of the last days of August, 1844, Dietrichson arrived on Koshkonong, and there he at once began to preach and organize the people into congregations.

From the records kept by him of those important events in the Norwegian American Lutheran church history, I make the following extract, translated from the first page of the Protocol or Kegister:

"Friday, the 30th of August, 1844, I, Johannes Wilhelm Christian Dietrichson, from ray fatherland, Norway, regularly ordained minister in the Lutheran church, held service for the Norwegian settlers living on Koshkonong Prairie. In this first service which I held liere, said day s afternoon, I preached in a barn at Amund Anderson's, on the words in Kev. 3, 11, Behold I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown! I sought according to the grace God gave me to impress solemnly, upon my countrymen s hearts, the importance of holding fast to the true saving faith and to the edifying ritual of the church of our fathers here in this land divided by so many erroneous sects. On Sunday, September 1, the 13th Sunday after Trinity, I held a service in the forenoon, and also administered the Lord s supper, in the same place, in the presence of a numerous gathering. This was in the eastern part of the settlement.

"On Monday, September 2, 1 held service and communion in the western part of the settlement in the open air, under an oak tree on Knud Aslakson Juve s land."

Mr. Dietrichson at once proceeded to organize the people into congregations. The so-called East church, in the town of Christiana, was organized October 10, 1844, and the West church, in the town of Pleasant Springs, on October 13, 1844. "The erection of two houses of worship," to quote the language of my friend, Rev. Adolph Bredesen, of Stoughtpn, Wisconsin, "was begun in the fall of 1844, and pushed to completion. TLe Western church was completed first, and was dedicated December 19, 1844, by Pastor Dietrichson, assisted by his friend, Pastor Clausen, of Muskego. The Eastern church \* \* \* was dedicated January 31, 1845. \* \* \* These were the first two Norwegian Lutheran church edifices on American soil. The third was the Muskego church, dedicated March 13, 1845. The Koshkonong churches were both built of logs and were of the same dimensions, 36 feet long and 28 feet wide. In both, movable benches served as seats, a plain table, adorned with a white cloth and a black wooden cross was the altar, a rude desk was the pulpit, and the baptismal font was hewn out of an oak log. After dedicating their churches, the two Koshkonong parishes sent a written call to Dietrichson, to become their settled pastor,"

As has already been shown, the Muskego church was begun in the spring of 1844. It was used by Rev. C. L. Clausen in the autumn of 1844, but was not dedicated before March, 1845. It would be stating the matter accurately, to say that the first church begun and built by the Norwegian immigrants in this century was the Muskego church; but that the two churches on Koshkonong, were the first to be dedicated. In this statement, I do not take into account the meeting house built by Elling Eielsen, in the Fox River settlement in 1842.

Ole Knudson Trovatten became the first school teacher on Koshkonong, at a salary of \$10 per month.

Dietrichson remained in America until the next summer, and on the 7th of June, 1845, he sailed from New York in the Swedish ship "Thore Petr," commanded by Capt. Anderson from Gefle, and bound for Stettin. After twenty-eight days he reached Elsinore, and from there he took a steamer to Norway. The next year, 1846, he published in Stavanger a little volume containing an interesting account of his travels and labors among the Norwegians in America.

During his absence, the Koshkonong congregations were served by Eev. C. L. Clausen. On July 11, 1846, he sailed from Norway to America again, and served his congregations until 1850, when he returned to Norway for good, and was succeeded the same year on Koshkonong by Rev. Adolph C. Preus.

Before returning to Norway in June, 1845, Dietrichson had visited a considerable number of the Norwegian settlements, and his book contains many important facts in regard to them. He visited our dear Fox Eiver settlement in the spring of 1845, and says there were at that time about 500 Norwegians in the colony. Some of them, he says, were Presbyterians, some Methodists, some Baptists, some Ellingians, some Quakers and some Mormons. Elling had but few adherents, but about 150 were Mormons. Ole Heier (Omdal) "was bishop and could heal the sick," Gudmund Haugaas was "high priest after the order of Melchizedek in the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." He was also "counsel of the highest Mormon bishop/ Dietrichson preached in the Fox River settlement the 4th Sunday after Easter, 1845. Gudmund Haugaas was present, and at the close of Dietrichson s sermon he said: "I desire to say a few words concerning the things the minister has uttered, if the audience will stop a moment; at least I suppose the minister will stop." Dietrichson did not stop. He had visited Gudmund Haugaas at his house the day before and had had a talk with him. There he saw, hanging over his sofa, a fac-simile of the golden tablets. The writing, he says, was a strange mixture of Greek, Hebrew, Syriac and other letters and of strange figures like Chinese writing, so that it was impossible to make out a single word.

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### History\_of\_the\_Scandinavians\_and\_Success (1893)

1846 . Reise blandt de Norske Emigranter i de Forenede Nordamerikanske Fristater . Rev . J. W . Dietrichson , Stavanger, Norway.

In 1844 Rev . J. W . C . Dietrichson arrived at Muskego from Norway ; he was a disciple of Bishop Grundtvig and succeeded , at least for a while, in convincing Clausen to his views. But Dietrichson 's Grundtvigianism terrified Eielsen and the friends of Hauge. ." With Dietrichson 's arrival," says Norelius , " commenced the great church -war , which has raged among the Norwegians up to the present time." In 1851, A . C . Preus, H . C . Stub , and C . L . Clausen , met at Rock Prairie , Wis., Dietrichson being in Europe at the time— and organized the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Synod ; Clausen was elected president of the Synod . The constitution of this organization , which it was claimed contained too much leaven of Grundtvigianism , was revoked the following year ; Clausen objected to the change and desired the leaven to remain.

The first church belonging to the regular Norwegian state church was built in the settlement of Koshonong, in 1844. with Rev . Dietrichson as minister.

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### A pioneer churchman: J.W.C. Dietrichson in Wisconsin, 1844-1850

by [Johannes Wilhelm Christian Dietrichson](#)

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Johannes Wilhelm Christian Dietrichson

### From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Johannes Wilhelm Christian Dietrichson (April 4, 1815 – October 15, 1883) was a Norwegian Lutheran minister who played an important role in the initial establishment of the Synod of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which eventually became the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

Dietrichson was born in Fredriksstad in Smaalenenes Amt, Norway, as a son of Fredrik Dietrichson (1787–1866) and Karen Sophie Henriette Radich (1794–1867). Through his sister he was an uncle of Johan Scharffenberg, and he was a distant relative of Norwegian politician and labor leader, Wilhelm Dietrichson (1880-1949).

In November 1839 he married Jørgine Laurentze Broch (1816–1841). She was a daughter of Lieutenant Colonel Johan Jørgen Broch (1791–1860) and a sister of Ole Jacob Broch and Jens Peter Broch. His wife died in childbirth in 1841, and Johannes Dietrichson then married Charlotte Josine Omsen Müller (1819–1903) in June 1846.

He grew up and attended school in Fredriksstad where his teachers included Hans Riddervold. He took his examen artium in 1832 and graduated from the Royal Frederick University in Christiania in 1837. He worked in Christiania from 1839, and was present at the Norwegian Missionary Society national convention in 1843. He was ordained a Lutheran minister on February 26, 1844, immigrating to the United States in July that same year.

Dietrichson arrived in Staten Island on July 8, 1844. After finding little interest in New York in organizing a Lutheran congregation, he continued to Muskego, WI. He preached his first two sermons at the Wisconsin settlements in Koshkonong Prairie on September 1 and 2, 1844. The preparatory address for the second service was from Psalm 78:19, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?" This service was held under two oak trees, in which Holy Communion was celebrated. Dietrichson organized the settlers into two churches and was called by each church to be their pastor during 1845.

A log church was built on a half acre of land purchased by Dietrichson. The first home to the East Koshkonong Lutheran Church was dedicated on January 31, 1845. After a stay in Norway between 1845 and 1846, during which he married, Dietrichson organized Koshkonong, Luther Valley, and eight other congregations in the state and served as pastor at Koshkonong from 1846 until 1850. He held his post until his return to Norway. At Koshkonong, Dietrichson left in his parish journals and church records of parish membership and ministerial acts, an important written legacy.

Dietrichson experienced a clash of interest with Lutheran laity leader Elling Eielsen. Although seeds of controversy were sown when Dietrichson questioned the validity of clergymen who had been ordained in America, he laid a strong foundation for Norwegian Lutheranism in the United States and encouraged other Lutheran clergymen from Norway to migrate to this country.

Dietrichson returned to Norway in 1850 where he subsequently held two pastorates. He was stationed in Nedstrand from 1850 to 1862 and Østre Moland from 1862 to 1876. This entire period was marked by disagreements with local parishioners. He then served as postmaster at Porsgrund from 1876 until 1882. He was the author of *Travels among the Norwegian Emigrants in The United North American Free States* (Norwegian: *Reise blandt de norske emigranter i "De Forenede nordamerikanske fristater*) which was published in Stavanger in 1846. He died in October 1883 in Copenhagen.

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1837 Bishop Jacob Neumann

"A Word of Admonition to the Peasants in the Diocese of Bergen Who Desire to Emigrate"

[NorwayHeritage](#)

A few of these early emigrants visited their old country and told of the new Promised Land. Knut Slovik's return in 1836 was among the best known of these visits, and his tales spread rapidly across the land. Mons K Langeland Ådland wrote that in America the farmer is as highly regarded as the president, and that in America the 'little' man did not have to remove his hat for the big shots he met. On this background the 'America fever' eventually spread to Hordaland. Also contributing were the underlying domestic causes such as the political, religious, social and economic conditions, which often were the triggering factors for the decision to emigrate. One of the main reasons

for emigrating was the large number of children per family and the shortage of arable land for the burgeoning farmer population. The law proscribed a simple ambulatory school and most people were reasonably literate.

The country's authorities, including county sheriffs and the clergy, were often in disaccord with the public and were, by and large, satisfied with the situation in the country at the time. Bishop Jacob Neumann in the Bergen diocese was concerned about the emigration because he saw that it would deplete the country's human resource, and in 1837 he wrote a lengthy pastoral letter warning those farmers in the diocese who harboured thoughts of emigrating. The letter said, among other things: "Remain in the country and sustain yourselves by honest toil". The emigrant Knud K. Langeland (b. 1813) was wise and also a particularly good writer and in his letters he answered the bishop's biblical quote as follows: "Either the bishop forgot, or he did not find it expedient under the circumstances, because the bishop did not mention the other command in the scriptures which says: "Be fertile, multiply and people the earth."

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Jacob Neumann (13 July 1772 – 25 January 1848) was a Norwegian bishop.

He was born in Strømsø as a son of Hans Neumann (1745–1789) and Annechen Johanne Blom (1754–1773), and a grandson of Jakob Hansen Neumann. He was also a first cousin of Gustav Peter Blom and Gustava Kielland and a second cousin of Christian Blom.

In February 1800 in Copenhagen, he married pharmacist's daughter Justine Marie Agnete Bruun (1780–1838). They had the grandchildren Henrik, Jakob and Emanuel Mohn and Kristofer Janson.

He studied under Christian Kølle at Snarøya from 1781 to 1785 and in Elsinore from 1785 to 1787, before enrolling at the University of Copenhagen, where he graduated in 1796 with the cand.theol. degree. He took the dr.philos. degree in church history in 1799 on the thesis *Historia primatus Lundensis*. He worked as a private tutor until 1799, when he became curate in Asker. In 1805 he was promoted to vicar. He continued writing, being one of the last Rationalists in Norway. In 1811 he published *Doctor M. Luthers lille Katechismus*, a version of Martin Luther's catechism. He was elected to the first session of the Parliament of Norway in 1814, representing Agershus Amt. In 1819 he became dean of Drammen in 1819. In 1822 he was promoted to bishop of the Diocese of Bjørgvin. He was a member of *Det nyttige Selskab* in Bergen, and was a co-founder of Bergens Sparebank in 1823 and Bergen Museum in 1825. He also served as deputy representative to Parliament in 1824.



He was decorated with the Order of the Dannebrog in 1811 and the Order of the Polar Star in 1815. He died in January 1848 in Bergen.

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As mentioned previously, the ruling strata of Norway were vigorously opposed to emigration. Although the civil authorities never imposed serious obstacles in the path of those choosing to emigrate,<sup>2</sup> they were, nevertheless, ideologically opposed to the movement. This attitude was shared by the clergy and chauvinistic intellectuals. The variety of arguments these groups used varied, and there was hardly a clearly defined division of efforts. An excellent example of the fusion of rational and emotional appeals resorted to was "Bishop Jacob Neumann's Word of Admonition to the Peasants."<sup>3</sup> This pamphlet was published in 1837, one year after Norwegian emigration began to assume dimensions of any consequence. Neumann outlined the hardships involved in emigrating and emphasized the spiritual dangers that the emigrants faced in America. In directing his argument to the *bonder*, he asked why any freeman

should want to emigrate. In Norway the *bonder* had liberty, his economic position was improving, and there were many places where, with none of the handicaps of a new language and customs a person could settle. Neumann rejected reports of abundance without effort as spurious owing to the high cost of living in the United States. On emotional grounds he argued:

... Here in Norway rest the ashes of your fathers; here you first saw the light of day; here you enjoyed many childhood pleasures; here you received your first impression of God and of His love; here you are still surrounded by relatives and friends who share your joy and your sorrow while there, when you are far away from all that has been dear to you, who shall close your eyes in the last hour of life? A stranger's hand! And who shall weep at your grave? Perhaps - no one!<sup>1</sup>

Neumann's admonition fell on deaf ears. Although there was some truth to his argument, the peasants were not persuaded. In the political realm, the Constitution of 1814 (the year Norway had separated from Denmark) had guaranteed the rights of the *bonder*, but this class lacked the necessary experience required for political leadership and was not able to maximize the full potentialities of this act for many years. Moreover, the *bonder* encountered stiff resistance from the entrenched hierarchies of Church and State which were reluctant to yield their power. This political rupture between the rulers and the ruled extended to other institutional areas in Norwegian society. Gjerset, in discussing the widening breach between the laity and clergy in connection with the persecution of Hauge, also takes note of other bases for the sharp differentiation between classes in eighteenth century Norway:

The cleavage in Norwegian society was caused by the Reformation when the Danish language was introduced as the Church and literary language. The city population and the official class, including the clergy, which were strongly mixed with foreign elements, had thoroughly assimilated the Danish language and culture, while the rural population still spoke their own tongue and adhered to their old customs. Under the shelter of absolutism in the period of union with Denmark, which fostered a distinct aristocratic spirit among the cultured classes, this condition had assumed a rigid permanence, and the *bonder* had become sharply differentiated from the city population and official class, not only in customs and language, but also in views and sympathies. The men of Eidsvold had created liberal political institutions suited to the most democratic society, but during the great European reaction, 1814-1830, it became evident that the old spirit of class prejudice, desire for special privileges, and the antipathy of the common people still prevailed in higher social circles.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 108-109.

The officials showed strong bureaucratic tendencies and continued to rule in the old spirit, even under the new constitution. Their views and tastes remained to a large extent unchanged, and they were glad to settle down to the old ways, not thinking that the great political change would necessitate a radical readjustment. What the result would be if the *bonder* should assume political leadership was a thought which had not yet dawned upon their mind, as they do not seem to have considered such a state of affairs to be within the realm of possibility.<sup>1</sup>

The *bonder* did not succeed in gaining some measure of political power until 1836. If one takes account of the economic and political realities encountered by the landless peasant and the *bonder*, it is not surprising that advice such as Neumann's would remain unheeded.

In the area of religious activities, a major ground of contention between the established clergy and the Haugeans was the latter's insistence on the right to have lay preachers. As we have seen, the breach between the laity and clergy caused by the persecution of Hauge was easily transformed from a purely religious conflict to a class conflict. This occurred during the 1830's when the *bonder* were making their strongest bids for political power. According to Rohne, "The breach between the clergy and Hauge, which had begun to heal was torn wide open when the clergy and the *bonder* were placed on opposite sides in this most bitter struggle for power. Hauge was a *bonder*, and it was indelibly stamped upon the popular mind that he had innocently suffered at the hands of overbearing officials and clergy. In the heat of the struggle, Hauge's blood was regarded as being particularly on the head of the clergy, and it must needs take a long time to erase this impression after it had been so thoroughly impressed upon the popular mind." <sup>2</sup> The disparity between lay and academic Christianity was narrowed somewhat in Norway during the 1840's and 50's, although it has been argued that the basic differences between the two persist to this day. There was a revival of the pietist spirit in academic circles that greatly mollified the Haugeans. Such was not to be the case in the United States. Here, the representatives of the Church could not count on the support of the State, and for the first time were confronted with genuine competition from the numerous sects that were an integral part of the new society.

At the same time when Neumann and the nationalists were carrying on their campaign against emigration, great excitement was being caused in Norway by the so-called "America Letters" that were streaming back to the country from the first explorers and settlers. As might be expected, Neumann and others tried to us more pessimistic letters as evidence and final proof of the folly of emigration. An immigrant who came to the United States in 1836 painted a most pessimistic picture of the conditions at the time.<sup>1</sup> He pointed to the perils of a long ocean voyage, the unhealthy climate, the language barrier, and the high costs of living. Essentially the same story is told by Peter Testman in his account of his experiences in America.<sup>2</sup> He was singularly discouraged by the practice of pre-emption, high labor costs, high prices, and the lack of churches, Testman, it should be noted, came to the United States during a depression and settled in one of the least successful Norwegian settlements.

Those who advocated emigration had little difficulty in pointing to optimistic, glowing accounts of America, that pictured the new country as a veritable paradise, and thus served to confirm the existence of an alternative mode of life the peasant dreamed and yearned for. Perhaps the most famous and influential of these accounts was "Ole Rynnings True Account of America" published in 1838.<sup>3</sup> Rynning believed that emigration was the key to the economic problems of the Norwegian *bonder* and landless laborers. In the last chapter of his book he roundly condemned the Norwegian clergy for intolerance and a lack of concern for and yearned for. Perhaps the most famous and influential of these accounts was "Ole Rynnings True Account of America" published in 1838.<sup>3</sup> Rynning believed that emigration was the key to the economic problems of the Norwegian *bonder* and landless laborers. In the last chapter of his book he roundly condemned the Norwegian clergy for intolerance and a lack of concern for improving the lot of the people. Although Rynning died in the ill-fated Beaver Creek settlement in Illinois, his enthusiasm for America never waned throughout the worst trials the settlement suffered. This enthusiasm was communicated to the peasants when his book was published in Norway. The images Rynning presented suited the potential emigrant's conception of a new way of life. "... Everyone can believe as he wishes and worship

<sup>1</sup> G. J. Malmin (ed.), "The Disillusionment of an Immigrant," *Norwegian-American Historical Studies and Records*, III (1928), 1-22.

<sup>2</sup> T. C. Blegen (ed.), "Peter Testman's Account of His Experiences in North America," *Norwegian-American Historical Association, Travel and Description Series*, I (1927), 1-60.

<sup>3</sup> T. C. Blegen (trans. and ed.), *Ole Rynning's True Account of America*. Minneapolis: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1926.