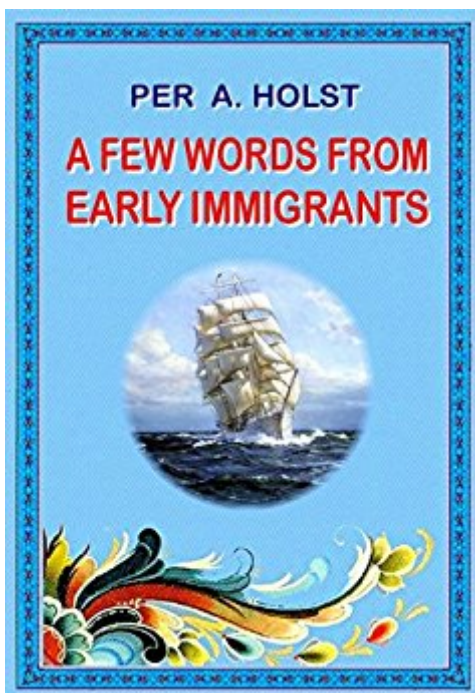


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A Few Words From Early Immigrants (Norwegian Emigration Literature)



Synopsis

VIVID and TRUE recollections by early immigrants to America's mid-West. Recounted in the immigrants' OWN WORDS. Painting COLORFUL and THOUGHT-PROVOKING pictures of experiences encountered on their way to America. Here are some samples: I grew up in a village where we all readily realized the purposes of the new-comer in town (we called him "the candidate"): he was there to teach the sons of the local pastor, the magistrate, the commanding officer, and the merchant. Undoubtedly, it was the sight of these well dressed, happy, fun-loving boys "who had nothing else to do but to play games and acquire knowledge" that raised the agonizing question (sharp as steel) in my young heart: "What have I done, and what have these done, that there is such a difference between us?" And when they ridiculed me for my torn clothes, laughed and joked about me and called out: "Look at him!" each time I came by, bent and hunched under a heavy burden, with my nose to the ground, I cried and swore and was deeply insulted.

Knud Langeland Some time before he [Bjørn Anderson Kvelve] left Norway for the U.S. he married Miss Abel Kathrine von Krogh, the daughter of Colonel Krogh in Vikedal. This marriage created much commotion, since the relatives of his wife never forgave her this misalliance. She, the high society daughter of a prominent military man, had married a simple man, the son of a local farmer. From that time on she was completely neglected by the Krogh family. Her husband became the subject of hatred, because it was he who had caused all this outrageous injustice.

Svein Nielsen Depressed both physically and mentally he stood there before us, like the subject of every kind of worldly misery, and described conditions here in terms so incredibly negative that I will never forget it. "God help and support you", he said, "because here [in America] there is no work, food, or land to be had! And whatever you do, don't go to Fox River, for there you most certainly will die from malaria."

Ole Nattestad Due to this carelessness during the landing [in Quebec] a chest fell into the water, such that its lid was knocked off, and all the content floated about. The chest had held all the belongings of a very poor family; they lost almost all they owned. There they stood, four children, no money, no other clothes but what they were wearing, and almost no food. The woman's name was Ragnhild, a sister of Sindre Dalkko. Her husband is Swedish.

Gro Svendsen These are some of the pioneers: Elisabeth Hysing Koren (1832-1912) from Larvik, the beautiful young bride of Pastor Vilhelm Koren, who kept a very personal and detailed diary of the trip to America in 1854 and her first year of marriage in Iowa. Caroline Linka Keyser Preus (1829-1880) from Kristiansand, the daughter of a Norwegian pastor, who kept a diary from the day she married her cousin, Pastor Herman Amberg Preus, until years later in Wisconsin. Gro Nielsdaughter Svendsen (1841-1878) from Hallingdal, who as a happy, vivacious young lady,

newly married and curious about almost everything, wrote numerous detailed letters home to her parents and siblings in Norway. Elise Tvede Wårrenskjold (1815–1895) became known as a "the woman with a pen," advising compatriots to come to Texas, because, "for poor people Texas is like Paradise. Anyone willing to work will make good money all year round; children are no burden - they can pick cotton." Søren Bache (1814–1890) from Drammen, young son of a well-to-do businessman, who went to America in 1839 and invested in several tracts of land in Muskego, selling it to newly arrived settlers on easy terms. Johannes W.C. Dietrichson (1815–1883) from Stavanger, a pastor who in 1846 was sponsored to go to Wisconsin and gather the Christians into organized Lutheran congregations and provide religious services for them.

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