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## Letter, 1854 [Translations]. Call Number, M94-396

Bondal, Gunleik Asmundson

[s.l.]: [s.n.], [s.d.]

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These copies were provided in November 1991 by:

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According to Gene:

The original letter was received by the great great grandfather of Gunleik Metveit, 3870 Fyresdal. It was given to a specialist at a university in Norway, who interpreted it letter by letter and then translated it as well as he could.

They came to the U.S. in 1847.

Gunleik Asmundson Bondal died in 1858 and is buried at Liberty Church, outside Deerfield, Dane County, Wisconsin. (without a tombstone)

They farmed on adjacent sections in Dane County; Section 5 in Christiana Township and, directly north, Section 32 in Deerfield Township. They had built a dugout on Section 32 when they first arrived, traces of which are still barely discernable.

Halvorsen's is near Liberty Corners (presently the intersection of State Highway 12 & 18 and Oak Park Road), which is near the northwest corner of Section 32.

For additional information about this family in the U.S., please contact Gene Gunderson.

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

We are are firmly convinced that you have waited a long time for a writing and information from us in this our foreign home. This step to find a way to this our farm on which we have settled was a chance course as over the ocean we went forward to take to this moral state.

We left from Kragro 8 days after Santenhun Dag (June 24, left on July 2) and finally reached Newyork after 8 weeks and 3 days sailing. We took the coast as usual West to Lindersness. There was a west wind so the Captain went into Mandahl to pick up several passengers. The wind had turned to the southwest so we had to stay there 3 days. During the night between 3 & 4 days, Losen, the port guide boat, followed us to Lindersness. The wind was still blowing from the southwest and the Captain kept going the whole time through the channel but the wind was sending us to far south so he set sail to the north. There we waited as we were near Trondheim. There he turned the boat around and sailed west to Northern Scotland. Since that time we had much beautiful weather.

Then we came to New York on December 1, at 6 o'clock in the morning. On the 2nd we left there at 6 o'clock in the morning and on the 3rd we were in Albany at 6 o'clock in the morning. The canal begins in the town of Albany and goes to the town of Buffalo. From there begins the long inland journey from New York to Koskong, it is called karskland in Norske. Here we stayed for 3 weeks time. The way has been long, about 300 Norske miles. We came to England Midlien (Engbret Ridlien?) and there we stayed until the following spring.

In the month of April we moved 3 miles farther west to Torgi Halverson's home. There we stayed a year in his house and Hingus Holer and his wife Ane were also there. They bought for themselves 20 acres of land from Torge Halverson and then we bought 124 acres of land beside them from Regerangen who owns a lot of land here. Now it is all sold hereabouts.

When we came here no one could tell us anything about our brother Aadne. He had not been on Koskong for about 3 years. He was in New Orleans in the fall. In November a letter came from him. Then he had come 12 Norske miles

and in the letter he asked me to meet him in Dodgeville, the town from which he had sent the letter. I was not familiar with the language but I went anyway, this long way to talk with him. Here he had bought 100 acres of land and when I got there he was working the land. I stayed a short time and then returned home. If at that time I had gotten land there he promised to give us 80 acres. But I was not satisfied with moving west. When I got home I began to work on the land until spring.

Then we got news that he had sold his land. In the month of April he came back to Koskonong. He advised me that I should buy some land soon. I did not have money to pay for all of the land so he had money and paid the largest amount of money. The total sum was 171 dollars. Since that time it is almost unbelievable how fortunate it has gone for us the whole time in the new world. There is no one of our ages here who have climbed upward as fast as we. Cattle is now high priced so the first thing each of us did was to sell cattle for 80 dollars each. We own 4 milk cows, 2 that are 2 years old, 2 that are 1 year old and 1 calf. 5 driving oxen, 10 hogs or swine, 20 chickens, 2 geese, and 5 sows. This fall we butchered 4 pretty big hogs.

This fall we cut so much wood that we can sell a hundred dollars worth. We had a desirable and fruitful year. It is not often that we have this much wood and it also has a high price. There are several here who have cut a thousand bushel of wood. They measure by the bushel, nothing higher and a bushel is 4 Potter smaller than a Fjerding 1/4 in Norway. The price per bushel is a dollar and that is expensive.

The new railroad has just been finished to Madison which is 3 norske miles west of here. Also every thing is expensive here that we need to work the land. We bought a plow to work up the new ground with for 12 dollars. One dollar to 12 dollars to plow a field with. A four wheeled wagon costs 61 dollars. One thrashing machine for 25 dollars, 2 ironspades for 2 1/2 dollars. Animals or cattle are high priced. A cow costs from 15 to 20 & 25 dollars. For the very best is 30 dollars. Driving oxen are usually sold two together. It is called a team. The cost is 50 to 100 do, that is the very best. For a sow 1 to 1 1/2 and 2 do. For a goat 3 to 5 dollars. For a pound of the finest wheat flour 2 to 3 cents. For 1 pound of pork or bacon 3 to 4 cents. For a pound of butter 6 to 12 cents. For a pound of tallow 10 to 12 cents. For a pound of candles from 12 to 14 cents. A pound of coffee 12 to 14 cents. For a pound of tea 50 to 60 cents. Clothing varies in price. Cloth that is 1/2 wool is 50 cents a yard. For the finest wool cloth 1 dollar a

yard. All cotton material 10 to 12 cents a yard. Linen 1 1/2 yards wide is 10 to 12 cents a yard. The best linen is 12 to 25 cents a yard. A pair of boots is 2 1/2 dollars. A pair of shoes \$1.30 to \$1.50. A cap cost 50 to 60 cents. Iron and steel costs 4 to 6 cents per pound. Barley is 30 cents a bushel and is about the same as barley in Norway. It has a tendency to get slimy so it is used for nothing but feed for the hogs. One ton of hay is 2 to 5 dollars per 2000 skale pds that measure from ounces to scale pd. A pair of horses cost 150 to 200 dollars. There are many horses here. All the different kind of good work tools here are so expensively made that the norske tools are like they were made by a child.

All that man shall work with is made in a large factory that is usually driven by steam engine. There are machines used to cut wood with. Some are called mower machines to cut hay with. Machines to saw wood with. Machines to thrash with. These machines are driven by horses. Wages vary with a years time. In the summer, wages are 15 to 20 dollar for a month. In the Winter they are 10 to 13 dollars a month. There is a place called Fenriet. There they have higher wages to earn for the winter work. The wages for a month is 15 to 20 dollars. Many are going south to take work between St Louis and New Orleans to cut wood. There a man can earn a dollar a day during the winter. Aadne has made the trip south since we came here and then earned 150 dollars during the winter.

I forgot to tell you what kind of work they have at Fenriet. There are many fur forests there and they cut them for timber. The fur trees are of tremendous size. Girls usually earn from 1 to 1.30 do to 1.50 for a week. The wage is the same both summer and winter. Their work is the same as a housekeeper in Norway. They have more respect for girls here than in Norway. When an American wants to hire a maid he comes with a horse and carriage. Whether or not they go home to his family or to church or they quit right away. So the husband drives them home. It is a shame that a girl shall go forward or go back. And the girls are so proud and have expensive cloths and so fixed up with clothes and goldrings that those who are not used to this must be greatly suprised. Girls never go without flowers to be fashionable. Young men go in such fine cloths that it glisens of them. I have never seen anything so nice or fine in Norway. Maybe one time. And here it is so that a working man will never be from the husbands or masters table to eat whether he works for a shop keeper or others. All shall be as highly respected.

Yes, Americans friendly and high flightedness we can not understand. We are so used to the proud European who are unfamiliar and find it a shame to laugh at a stranger or foreigner. And one never sees an American with his hands at his sides as the foreigners do. The lands riches and costliness is impossible for us to describe. Our view of this place at first was as if we were greatly disappointed and unhappy with the newness of it. At first a man is not familiar with it all and for another thing man finds the land is not as we thought. The land is not flat but rolling. It is layered with hills and valleys and mountains which are higher. These stretch for the most part north and south. And we thought the ground was covered with the most luxuriant grassland but we found it very different. The meadows here will not grow grass that is usable and the remainder is woods that doesn't have the value as the woods and grasslands in Norway. If a man will want to plow and cultivate it for hay, then the same wild grass grows again unless man sows timothy. On the edge of the woods the entire ground is overgrown with scrub oak almost as tight as it will grow but grass and flowers are over all the woods and fields. The grass that grows on dry ground is cut early. There are many flowers on big marshes. There is the best hay making, on a big marsh. If they are not near a marsh they have no hay to mow. Many around here has done this. We had a good hay crop and have enough winter fodder for about 50 big cattle. We have not plowed up more than we can use. About 20 acres. But come next summer we will plow again and when we can plow as much as we want we will have 50 acres. An acre is about 4 1/2 Norske measure. We can usually plow up 2 acres a day. The prairie is over grown with grass under the trees and there it will not grow. The woods is mostly Oak trees to be used for utility lumber and they use oak wood for timber. The woods is not excellent with fruit. There are no blue berries and wild fruit is rarely seen around here and even so the ground is fruitful and all kinds of fruit grows like the fruit that grows under glass in Norway. Cotton does not grow here. Neither does sugar. That grows south of here. Coffee and tea does not grow in the whole North America. When you wrote about some coffee beans it is for us impossible to obtain them. They grow in South America under sunshine and warm and unhealthy climate. Here the climate is cold, healthy and fresh so a man cannot feel the change.

There has been built 2 beautiful and costly churches of stone. Before there were 2 churches and now there are three and they are divided into 3 parishes. The new one that was built is very near to us and is called St. Pauls Church and here where we live it is called Liberty Prairire. It is also called the church on liberty prairire.

Here the prairire has had colera and it has ruled as in Norway. It comes to take control and it has dominated here on the land. Colera has been here on Koskonong but this fall it has not been here in these easterly places. Aadne has been sick with it 2 times and both times we cured him. We all have been in good health the whole time and have had better health than in Norway. I have not been this well for many years as now since we came here and Kari also finds herself well satisfied. Now we do not want to go back even if we were the owners of the best farm in Mbland. This we know you cannot believe.

My wife has had 2 pregnancies since we arrived here. The first were in the year of 1850 the 13 of april and then she delivered twins. One was named Grumund and the other Ole. Grumund lived just 10 days and then died. Ole is doing well. The other was born August 16 in 1853 and was baptised on the 25th. That one was given the name Tone in Baptisim. All of our children are in good health, growing and thriving well. We do not want to forget to thank our Father in Heaven who cares for all in his creation every day of our lives. I would not advise any stranger or rich man to come here to this ground as those who have large estates would wonder at the beginning. But those who are good workers will go on because one has to work harder here than in the Father land. Torgren Bendikson must have wondered about that. When Ole Maarke wrote about a little unfortunate happening, which for us is a disagreeable thing, but for him I think it was unpleasent. Day wages are high and work should be carried on and also one has to follow ones work craft. And those who have many small children without money must usually go to work for others.

Here there is a great desire to go to California to look for gold. Thousands of Nbrske and Americans are going and coming back with hundreds of dollars in gold and money. Those who want to go there earn 100 dollars a month. Knut Olsen Forsgrund has big thoughts about going there. I think he will. Before, money for the trip was 300 dollars. Now it is 100 dollars. Now there is a faster way to get there. The train is now finished to California. Those who are so inclined and are able to go there are merly fortunate.

From me, Kari Evensdatter, I would like to kindly ask you who are there to greet my aged father if he is still living, and to all our sisters and brothers that we are living well and are with good health.

From your devoted brother, Aadne Asmundson, I believe that I would advise you to come here to America and that you would find it better here when you shall acquire 100 dollars when you earn only 20 dollars in Norway. This I am well acquainted with. I can get a large contract for steady work and get money. Otherwise do as you think but my advise is the best.

As I had forgotten what you asked me about whether I had gotten a letter before or are we so that we have not written before. This is the reason man writes to soon or to late. I forgot to give you the length of a yard. It is one and one half Alen.

Now we will go no further and must break off this our writings. With a diligent greeting to lovable and unforgettable sisters and brothers. And the same to all relatives and known friends. Live well and if we are not fortunate enough to see one another more in this world may we all meet and go forward with gladness in the next. Write us a letter and tell of yourselves.

Koskonong in Wisconsin the 17th of January 1854

Gunder Asmundson Bondal      Kari Evensdatter      1854

Aadne Asmundson Bondal