

FIRST BURIAL AT GARFIELD

The following information was obtained from the Museum in Madison. A scrapbook given to the Museum by Mrs. Clara Haugen Dermandy, which had been prepared by her father Henry Haugen of Freeland Township, held articles clipped from a Norwegian newspaper written by A. J. Haugen, County Commissioner and later County Register of Deeds around 1899.

These articles were translated into English by Gerda Dolman. The translations read as follows:

Paul Olson obituary who died at the County Poor Farm on Friday the 15th of October 1899 at age 89.

The article includes the story of their lives in America and of Mrs. Olson who died at the home of her son Gustaf about 5 years earlier (1892?).

She was the first person buried at Garfield cemetery. Although they had both lived at the Poor Farm, Mrs. Olson pleaded to be brought back to Gustaf's home to die. She was so crippled that her head was bent down to her knees. Mr. Haugen had visited many sick folks in hospitals but had never seen anything like Mrs. Olson's pain and suffering. Mr. Olson stayed with Gustaf a short while after his wife's death but was brought back to the Poor Farm where Mr. C.J. Dybedahl the Superintendent lovingly cared for him. Mr. Haugen had promised him that he would see to it that Paul would be buried next to his wife. He and Ole Thompson went to the Poor Farm to plead his case with Co. Commissioner Gunther. Emil Dybedahl drove the corpse to Garfield where he lies next to his wife. A.J. Haugen

Paul Olson as born in 1807 in Javnakers Parish, Hadeland Norway and died at the Poor Farm near Madison, Mn. On Friday Oct. 15, 1897 at age 89. Olson and his wife came from Norway 13-14 years ago. They lived with their son Gustaf who had a farm in Mehurin.

The first I knew of this man was in June 1890. Olson and his wife gave their ages as 82 as they were the same age. They were the oldest couple in my district where I took the census.

After a while, I got word from Gustav Olson that his old mother was sick and he was no longer in position to take care of her. He could take care of his father because he was well and could work for his food and clothes

and a little more. Gustav got a little help from the county for his Mother. In the Fall he said he could no longer take care of either his mother or father.

After carefully checking with neighbors, I found it necessary to bring both to the poor farm- which was a sad and deplorable situation for they left carefree life and lovely home in Norway. They used up their life's savings on the treacherous and fearful trip over the ocean in order to find their children, who they hoped would take care of them if they became sick until they would close their eyes in death. What did they find? God he praised, in a Nils Nordahl and his brave wife they found kind hands and heats that did provide for them both physically and spiritually. A hearty thanks to you on behalf of these 2 old people. May God bless you for that.

When the old wife felt that death was drawing near, she pleaded to come home to her son Gustav, to die there. Gustav then got good pay from the County to care for his Mother, and that fall she died there after enduring terrible pain. She became so crippled by rheumatism she could hardly raise her head from her knees. I have visited many hospitals and have seen many sick people in my life, but never have I seen anything like it. In the last weeks of her life she had to sit with her feet in buckets of dirt in which chloride of lime and other chemicals were added to take away some of the terrible stink. It was not only her bodily pain she bore. The Devil tormented so badly at times that she begged that someone should end her life. Finally her time came and I hope the same angels that bore Lazarus soul home also brought her soul to God.

She was the first to be buried in Garfield Lutheran Cemetery.

Paul got to stay with his son Gustav a short while after his wife's death. He was able to work a little. Every day he walked 2 or 3 times to the Cemetery, about 80 rods, to look at his dear wife's grave. God alone knows of the sighs and prayers that were sent up from this old man's sorrowing, broken heart. Later that fall a child died and someone started to dig a grave next to her grave. Then the old man came upon them and he tenderly pleaded that he be allowed to be buried there "by the side of my wife" he said and he did.

Later that Fall I brought him back to the Poor Farm and the new manager, Mr. Dybedahl, dearly cared for him.

Paul had to keep to his bed 3-4 years. I got the message late Saturday afternoon that Paul had died and would be buried at Hauge's (Ness) Cemetery Sunday at 3 p.m. After dinner I immediately thought about my promise. Memories of Paul's frequent visits to his wife's grave and his prayers to be allowed to sleep there, stood before me, so I decided to make a try for it. First, I spoke to Prof. O Lokensgaard what he thought of the

situation. He thought it would be good if Paul could have his wish. Together with Ole Thompson, we went to the Poor Farm where Prof. O Lokensgaard gave a powerful sermon to the few dear friends who had assembled to show Paul a last honor.

County Commissioner Gunther was there. First, I talked privately to him and asked that Paul be buried in the Garfield Cemetery. Gunther immediately agreed if there would be no extra cost to the County. Then I talked to the folks assembled and all thought that his wish be granted. Emil Dybedahl brought the casket to the Cemetery in frightful weather on Monday. A few friends went along to help open the grave and the last remains of Paul Olson were put to rest beside his wide.

Rest in Peace until Resurrection Morning!

Respectfully,

A. J. Haugen