Why Christian Glasrud Immigrated to America

by
J. R. Christianson*

Toten and the other districts around Lake Mjøsa, Norway's largest lake, have long been known for their rich soil, sunny slopes, and large farms. Together with the Oslo Fjord region, this was traditionally the breadbasket of Norway. Districts like Toten were the envy of Norwegians who struggled to survive on tiny patches of arable land along the steep fjords of the west, or who battled short growing seasons and dependence upon livestock husbandry in the high mountain valleys of the east. To farmers in many in other parts of Norway, those big Toten farms with their immense buildings, family portraits, mahogany furniture, grandfather clocks, a dozen or more horses in the stable, and thirty or forty cows in the barn must truly have seemed like paradise on earth.

O. S. Johnson, who wrote the history of Spring Grove, was from Hallingdal, one of those inland mountain valleys. He could hardly mention Toten without commenting on the prosperity of the district. He said, for example, that his old friend in Spring Grove, Peter Halvorsen Torgenrud—called Peter Totning—"told that his father considered himself to be like one of those great gentlemen farmers over in Toten, although the farm of Torgunrud was not one of the largest in Toten. Still, he could have had a good life there, but his father was a bit too fond of aquavit, and it ended in bankruptcy." Describing Peter Torgenrud himself, Johnson wrote that he was "a big, fine-looking man, like your typical rich Norwegian farmer ... [He] owned 240 acres of land at the time of his death, and the sale of this large, valuable farm brought in a great deal of money."[1]

When Johnson discussed "Kristian Glæserud," he commented again on the prosperity of Toten, but also on the oppressive life of laborers on big Toten farms, comparing those farms to life on the egalitarian American frontier. He reported that Christian Glasrud purchased 280 acres of school land near Spring Grove and added, "He had gotten a big farm for himself, much bigger than the rich farmers of Toten had, but there were no elegant buildings with fine furniture and soft sofas, where a man could sit and smoke his long meerschaum pipe with silver decoration, nor could he take a stroll around his land and make certain that those lazy crofters did something in return for all the potatoes and herring they devoured, and for their huge wages of up to six cents a day. No, [Glasrud] had to be both owner and crofter, and Berthe Maria both housewife and maidservant, and help with the work both outside and in, as was the lot of pioneers in those days."[2]

Official Residences in Toten

There certainly were some large farms in Toten, where the owners lived in palatial homes with staffs of tutors, governesses, coachmen, cooks, and maidservants. Some of the largest and most prestigious mansions were the homes of officials like the governor (*amtmann*), pastor, district judge (*sorenskriver*), crown bailiff (*fogd*: administered crown property and taxes), district physician, and officers in the army reserve. These mansions of government officials were not necessarily located on the very largest farms, but remember that an official had an income from his office to supplement the income from his farm, so officials were able to live very well. Most of their farms in the Toten area were located in Hof parish in East Toten, near the shores of Lake Mjøsa. Here are a few examples from the 1865 census data, including the number of livestock and *tønner* of each kind of grain, peas, and potatoes planted that year:[3]

Farm	Parish	Horses	Cows	Sheep	Hogs	Wheat	Rye	Barley	Oats-Barley	Oats	Peas	Potatoes
Evenrud (physician)	Hof	9	25	6	5	-	-	8	8½	-	3	80
Præstegaard (pastor)	"	7	14	14	5	-	2½	15	15½	2	5	89
Tangen (army capt.)	Kolbo	6	18	20	1	-	½	3¼	1	1/8	1¼	30
Præstegaard (pastor)	Aas	5	17	17	6	-	1¼	6	7	-	2¼	22
Bredlid (bailiff)	Hof	5	15	12	2	-	5/8	2	7½	-	2	16
Grimstad (major)	"	4	15	4	2	-	7/8	2½	8½	-	1	13
Sukkestad (governor	"	3	10	11	4	-	1	3	4	-	1	13
Billerud (judge)	"	2	9	6	2	-	1	2	3	-	1	15

Rich Farmers and Poor Crofters

The farms of government officials were generally large, but they were not the largest farms in Toten. Some of the local farming families had even larger ones. Besides the main farm, these very large farms included a number of crofts (*husmannsplasser*), typically located on the margins of the property. There could be a hundred or more people living on such a large farm, counting the family, relatives, guests, servants, and all the crofter families.

These farms had large houses full of fine furniture, with a Toten grandfather clock or two, lavish collections of linens, fine Norwegian glassware, and family silver. When these rich farming families celebrated a wedding, the event went on for days, involving half the parish and others from far beyond. They hosted great balls during the Christmas season, entertaining members of the Storting and other prominent guests, who gathered around the punch bowl, played cards, socialized, and danced to the music of a local orchestra. Proud of their status as farmers, these folks did not stand in awe of the university-educated officials. They were not dirt farmers, but managers of large-scale agricultural operations. The big farming families of Toten lived the life of country gentry.

Members of these families did not stand outside in the snow and hold the horses of guests who attended their Christmas balls: their crofters did that. The wives and daughters of these families did not milk those long lines of cows: crofter women and hired milkmaids took care of that. Crofters (*husmenn*) were tenants who lived in small cottages and worked off their rent by laboring so many days a year on the farm, for which they also received a noon meal and a token wage. The Spring Grove historian, Johnson, was not too impressed with the quality of the fare provided to them. Crofter men worked as farm laborers, crofter women did hard work like milking, washing, ironing, baking flatbread and *lefse*, and the like. On their days off, crofters tended their own small plots of potatoes and barley. They kept a milk cow or two and borrowed a horse when one was needed. The large farms also had summer *seter* pastures in the mountains, where servant girls would live in small huts, tending the animals, milking the cattle and goats, and making butter and cheeses

Some crofters had a trade or special skill– clockmaker, blacksmith, *rosemaler*, cabinet maker, brass founder, silversmith, tailor, cobbler, hardanger fiddler, schoolmaster, or soldier in the reserves for men, weaver, seamstress, or midwife for women. People with skills like these generally had a better standard of living than farm laborers. Frequently, they paid their croft rent in cash instead of working it off.

Most of the largest Toten farms were in Hof and Balke parishes, near the lake in East Toten. The common small grain in eastern Norway was barley; only a few farms in the very best locations attempted to raise wheat. Some also raised rye for bread. A few raised oats, and most raised peas and a combination of oats and barley (*blandkorn*) for fodder. Large farms at higher elevations, like Majer and those in Aas parish of West Toten, tended to raise more potatoes. Here are 1865 census statistics for some of the larger farms in Toten:

Farm	Parish	Horses	Cows	Sheep	Hogs	Wheat	Rye	Oats-Barley	Barley	Oats	Peas	Potatoes
Rogneby Nedre	Hof	33	87	-	22	-	-	13	20	25	10	80
Majer	"	23	45	15	12	-	1¼	7	20	4	5	100
Kraby Vestre	"	13	47	13	14	-	-	13	13	2	3	89
Balke	Balke	13	43	36	6	3/8	2	13	10	4	4	70
Gihle	Hof	12	42	8	5	3	1	10	14	5	5	33
Alm	Aas	13	40	20	3	-	-	15	15	-	2½	100
Tømmerhol	Hof	16	37	13	5	3/8	2	8	18	-	3 3/8	70
Rustad Nedre	"	12	34	12	4	-	1	10	15	-	3	80
Holte	Aas	12	29	17	5	-	1	7	9½	6½	3	50

Inheritance

When it came time to transfer a farm from one generation to the next, two contradictory ideals came into play. On the one hand, Norwegians wanted to divide the inheritance equally among all their children. On the other hand, they wanted to pass on the farm to one heir undivided. The result of these desires was that Norwegian law made a distinction between ownership of a piece of property and the right to farm it. The right to work the land was called the *åseterett*. One could inherit the *åseterett* without inheriting the ownership of the whole property. That allowed one person to take over the farm and work it, even though it might be inherited jointly by all the siblings.

The normal pattern was to divide property equally among all children, with the right to work the family farm (*åseterett*) going to one heir, usually a son but sometimes to a daughter and her husband. Daughters received half of their inheritance in the form of a dowry at the time of marriage and the other half when the estate was settled. Consequently, sons received twice as much as daughters in the final settlement of the parents' estate (daughters had already received their dowries or would receive them in the future). Generally, the aim was to give daughters their rightful inheritance in personal property and cash, so that the family real estate could go to one or more of the sons.

For these patterns to work, the population had to be more or less stable, as it was for much of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. In general terms, with a replacement level of surviving children, there would be one son and one daughter on average in each generation. The daughter would typically marry a neighboring farmer and take her dowry to her new home, while her brother's wife would bring her dowry to the home farm. When the parents died and the son took over, he inherited the *åseterett* and two-thirds of the ownership of the farm (if the parents simply retired, he also had the obligation to provide their pension, called *føderåd*), while his sister inherited one-third ownership of the farm. Meanwhile, the son's wife also inherited one-third ownership of her home farm. Ideally, the family simply sold the wife's share and used the money to buy the sister's share, whereupon everything was ready for the next generation.

In the late eighteenth century, however, the population of Norway began to grow, and it continued to grow, much faster than the economy could expand. That created problems. Suddenly, there were not two heirs on the farm, but a whole batch of them. Furthermore, people were living longer, so there were more retired parents who had to be supported from the income of the farm, as well as more children in the coming generation. Of course, some couples still had small families or no children at all. If a family had a daughter but no sons, she and the young man who married her would take over the farm. Families with a lot of surviving children were in trouble, however, especially when there were lots of them for two or more generations in a row.

Since there were not many opportunities in urban areas in Norway, people needed to find ways to feed more mouths from the same rural resources. This process was aided by a new crop from Peru – the potato – that could be grown at higher elevations and in frost-prone areas, where small grains would not mature but potatoes would. Another method of increasing production was to expand the summer flocks and herds in the high mountain pastures. Clearing land was still another, especially in upland areas, where farms were often separated by uncultivated stretches of forest and bog. Sometimes, enough forest could be cleared and bogs drained to allow the farm to be divided into two farms. Finally, crofts could be cleared on the margins of the farm, where some of the sons and daughters from large farm families could live their adult lives as crofters, perhaps learning a trade to provide extra income. The croft land, however, was still owned by the farm.

The steady growth of the crofter class provided an increasing source of cheap labor, which in turn allowed farmers to make labor-intensive improvements that increased farm productivity. The low cost of labor meant that those who controlled large farms were in a position to improve their situation substantially. The range of skills available in rural areas also grew rapidly, primarily among crofters, enriching Norwegian folk culture and increasing the living standard of a few. At the same time, however, increasing numbers of people found themselves the victims of downward social mobility, and rural poverty increased. For every rich farming family, there was a growing swarm of crofters. Some of these crofters were close relatives of the prosperous farmers.

Divided Farms

By the middle of the nineteenth century, clusters of farms with the same root name indicated that a larger farm had been divided at some time in the past, generally to provide land for several heirs. Sometimes, a croft would be separated from the main farm, and the owners would gradually improve it to the level of a small farm.

This happened at Glæserud in the mid-eighteenth century, when a younger son, Anders Christensen (1746-83), took over the former croft of Glæserudbakken, while the main farm went to his older brother, Niels Christensen (1727-91). Eventually, the former croft was improved, and the croft name of Glæserudbakken was changed to the farm name of Søndre Glæserud.

In a later generation, another croft became a small farm. Sometime in the 1830's or 1840's, Christian Johannesen took over the croft of Glæserudstuen as a separate smallholding. In time, this former croft also grew into a good family farm. When Christian and family left for America in 1853, they sold it to his brother, Ole. That took care of two brothers: one in America, one on Glæserudstuen. Another brother, Hans, had married in 1842 and settled with his family on the nearby farm of Gamme. In 1858, after Christian had gone to America, provision was made for the two youngest brothers by dividing the main Glæserud farm between them, Andreas receiving what became Østre Glæserud and Johannes receiving Øvre Glæserud.

The Glæserud farms were located at a rather high elevation in Aas parish in West Toten, not far from Torgunrud, which had been similarly divided. Over the course of generations, the process of division had gone much farther on Glæserud's neighboring farms of Hexum and Sivesind. By 1865, Sivesind had been divided into no fewer than *nineteen* farms and at least six crofts, while Hexum had been divided into another nineteen farms and five or more crofts. Fifty or more households, over 300 people, were living on what had once been two farms!

The 1865 census data below shows the Glæserud and Torgunrud farms, as well as the largest and smallest of the Hexum and Sivesind farms. In addition, the 1853 *Deodata* party of emigrants from West Toten included families from the small farms of Voldengen, Roksvolden, and Bratbakken, and another from the large croft of Fladten, so they are also included, along with Hans Johannesen Glæserud's farm of Gamme.

The larger farms in this group have three to six horses, eight to ten cows, a few sheep, and a hog or two for fall slaughtering. These were good family farms, so there was no economic reason for those families to emigrate. The one-horse farms were marginally capable of supporting a family, although most people with farms of this size also had to look for part-time

work outside the farm. Families on the smallest freeholdings did not even have a horse, nor in some cases even a cow, and they were likely to be struggling on the verge of existence, working for others most of the time.

Farm	Parish	Horses	Cows	Sheep	Hogs	Wheat	Rye	Oats-Barley	Barley	Oats	Peas	Potatoes
Gamme	Aas	3	14	10	6	-	-	3¾	13	-	1¼	39
Glæserud Øvre	"	4	10	8	3	-	½	3	5	-	1	20
Glæserud Østre	"	3	10	8	3	-	½	2	4	-	1	16
Glæserudbakken	"	2	7	6	1	-	¼	2	2	-	¾	7
Glæserudstuen	"	1	5	4	1	-	¼	½	2	-	½	5
Hexum Nordre	Aas	6	16	18	2	-	5/8	3¾	11¼	-	1	22½
Sivesind Østre	"	4	10	11	2	-	5/8	2½	7½	-	¾	12
Sivesind Mellem	"	-	1	-	-	-	3/16	3/8	3	-	5/16	3¾
Hexum Braatevolden	"	-	-	-	-	-	-	3/8	1¼	-	-	1¾
Torgunrud Østre b	Aas	3	8	12	1	-	¼	2	6	1½	1 1/8	12
Torgunrud Østre a	"	2	4	5	1	-	1/8	1¼	2½	-	½	2¼
Torgunrud Østre c	"	1	3	-	1	-	1/8	½	¾	2½	1/8	3
Torgunrudhagen	"	-	-	-	-	-	-	¼	½	½	-	1½
Roksvolden	Aas	1	7	11	-	-	¼	1	4	-	3/8	6
Voldengen	"	1	4	8	-	-	1/8	¾	3¾	-	1/8	5
Fladten (croft)	"	1	3	5	-	-	1/8	5/16	1¼	-	1/8	1¼
Bratbakken Øvre	Hof	1	2	1	-	-	-	¾	1	-	1/8	3

American Pastors from Toten

Another group of emigrants from Toten were those who became pastors in America. The first directory of Norwegian Lutheran pastors in America listed eleven who came from Toten.[4] It has been possible to identify the home farm of seven or eight of them. Two were the sons of pastors, and the others came from farms or crofts of varying sizes. Their backgrounds covered the whole range of Toten society from rich to poor.

Only one came from East Toten. He was Jacob Aall Ottesen (1825-1904), son of Pastor Otto Christian Ottesen, who lived in the East Toten parsonage (*præstegard*) in Hof parish. J. A. Ottosen emigrated in 1852 and became a leading clergyman of the Norwegian Synod. His sister, Christiane Elisabeth (died 1873), married a Norwegian-American pastor and became an ancestor of the Hjort and Preus families in America.[5]

Of those from West Toten, one was also a pastor's son. Claus Friman Magelssen (1830-1904) was the son of Pastor Wilhelm Christian Magelssen, who lived in the West Toten parsonage in Aas parish.[6] His father was an opponent of emigration and tried to stop it, but Claus emigrated to America in the late 1850's and served Norwegian Synod congregations in Wisconsin and Minnesota for the rest of his life. With his pastor cousins, Kristian Magelssen (1839-1921) and Finn Magelssen (1878-ca. 1960), he founded an American Lutheran dynasty that has continued to serve the church to the present.

The other Norwegian-American pastors from West Toten included J. A. Blilie, who belonged to the Norwegian Synod (affiliated with Luther College) like Ottesen and the Magelssens. He came from either Blilie or Bliliestuen. Nils Amlund of the Norwegian Synod, who was pastor of Glenwood 1883-88, came from a very small farm, no larger than most crofts. Three pastors of the United Church (affiliated with St. Olaf College) were born or grew up on small crofts, O. J. J. Tollerud on Øverbystuen, Halfdan Simensen on Haugom, and H. H. Holte on Søndre Holte. Gustav Gjerstad of Hauge's Synod was an orphan who grew up in foster care on the large farm

of Gjerstad. Here are the 1865 census statistics for these farms and crofts that were the childhood homes of Norwegian-American pastors:

Farm	Parish	Horses	Cows	Sheep	Hogs	Wheat	Rye	Barley	Oats-Barley	Oats	Peas	Potatoes
Gjerstad[7]	Kolbo	8	20	16	5	-	1¼	7½	6¼	-	1½	50
Præstegaard (pastor)	Hof	7	14	14	5	-	2½	15	15½	2	5	89
Præstegaard (pastor)	Aas	5	17	17	6	-	1¼	6	7	-	2¼	22
Blilie[8]	"	5	19	17	3	-	1½	4	8	-	3	15
Blilistuen	"	2	5	6	1	-	¼	1¼	3	½	¼	5
Amlund[9]	Aas	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1¼	-	-	2½
Holte Søndre (croft)[10]	Kolbo	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	1¼
Øverbystuen (croft)[11]	"	-	1	7	-	-	-	-	1¼	-	-	½
Haugom (croft)[12]	"	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

Emigration to America

Many people who emigrated from crofts and smallholdings were actually the sons and daughters of farmers who had suffered downward mobility and wanted a fresh start, like Christian Glasrud. If they owned their smallholding or inherited part of their ancestral farm, they had some financial resources and could afford the expense of emigration. In this way, they were typical of the emigrants from eastern Norway in the 1850's.

Why people emigrated from small, divided farms is starting to become clear. They had come to the end of the line in terms of their traditional way of utilizing the family's resources. Hexum and Sivesind had been divided into so many tiny farms that only a few could provide a decent living. If the families living on farms like these happened to be large, they were in trouble, because the farm was too small to be divided again, and the family could not afford to give their children a good education. When they grew up, most of the children would have to find a living in working-class neighborhoods of cities and industrial towns, or on a humble croft in their home area. The latter choice was much more likely because Norwegian urban growth was so slow.

The Glæserud family faced these hard choices when their five sons, born in the years 1813-25, came to maturity in the 1840's. These sons were part of a "baby boom" generation born in the decade following the end of the Wars of Napoleon. Their generation grew up during a long era of economic stagnation and postwar depression, and prospects for their future were not good, at least not in Norway. Of course, the outlook was brighter for the children born to government officials and the owners of big farms in East Toten, though not for their crofters and servants.

At this very time, news of opportunities in America began to filter into the upland districts of Norway. The first emigrants left East Toten in 1846. Emigration from West Toten began in 1849. A swelling stream departed every spring thereafter, encouraged by letters that came from those who had gone ahead, letters that were passed from hand to hand, read aloud and discussed, sometimes even printed in the local newspaper. In the years 1851 and 1852, an emigration agent named Elias Stangeland, originally from the Stavanger area, passed through Toten, held meetings to promote emigration, and handed out a book he had written about America, where he had lived for four years.[13] "America fever" soared to epidemic proportions after Stangeland's meetings, and more people than ever before planned to leave Toten in 1853. Farm auction after farm auction was held that winter and spring to raise the cash.

A Swedish scholar has described emigration from any given place as a process that evolves through four phases.[14] In the *"initial phase,"* the emigrants are upper-class adventurers who want to see a bit of the world. Some of them settle abroad, but others come back home when the fun wears off. While they are abroad, they write letters, newspaper articles, and books that give their fellow countrymen a better picture of the outside world. In the second or *"growth phase,"*

the emigrants tend to come from solid middle-class families who have the means to emigrate and who generally travel in groups of families from the same area. These were the kind of people who began to leave Toten in the late 1840's, where this phase lasted until the beginning of the American Civil War in 1861. In the third or *"saturation phase,"* people of all social classes, rich and poor, join the migration stream, many of them traveling as individuals and some of the poorer families migrating by stages. First, one family member would travel abroad, and when that person had acquired some savings, money orders or prepaid tickets would be sent home so the rest of the family could follow. At the same time, steamships took over from sailing ships during the 1870's, and competition between steamship lines drove down the cost of passage. This third phase lasted from the end of the Civil War until the economic depression of 1893. Finally, in the fourth or *"regression phase,"* travel was cheap, and increasing numbers of young, unmarried men and women traveled alone or with friends, while return migration also increased. This phase occurred around the period 1905-14 for Norway in general. By then, the world was a far different place than it had been in the 1850's, transoceanic travel was faster, more regular, and much less expensive, and railroads speeded overland transportation.

America in the 1850's

While opportunities for the Napoleonic post-war "baby boom" generation were extremely restricted in Norway, things were much different in America. There, it was possible in the 1850's to acquire a large farm, simply by purchasing government land by preemption for $1.25 an acre. The only condition was that you had to be willing to travel to the western edge of agricultural settlement—the frontier—in order to find land that was still available. Everybody who wanted land was headed for that same frontier, some to speculate or start a town and others to farm, so good land went fast and the frontier kept moving westward. Around 1850, it jumped the Mississippi into northeastern Iowa, and shortly thereafter, into southeastern Minnesota.

Frontier land came on the market after the U.S. government signed a treaty with an Indian tribe to relinquish a certain stretch of land, and after that newly acquired government land had been surveyed. A few settlers generally came in illegally before the area was officially opened for settlement. When it was opened, they came in swarms.

The northeastern corner of Iowa came on the land market in the year 1849, following a series of treaty arrangements that led to the removal of the Winnebago Indians. By 1850, there were 500 settlers in what had already become Winneshiek County, and the rival towns of Freeport and Decorah were taking shape as shanty towns in the valley of the Upper Iowa River. Around twenty percent of the original settlers in the county were Norwegians, most of whom came from older Norwegian settlements in southeastern Wisconsin, including Luther Valley in Rock County near Beloit, Koshkonong in Dane County south of Madison, and Muskego in Waukesha and Racine Counties northwest of Racine.[15]

In Glenwood Township, east of Freeport and Decorah, a few Yankee squatters from Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois had been the first to arrive but eventually drifted on. Norwegians began trickling in during 1849 and came in larger numbers in 1850, when Per Skreppen and Nils Toyen from Toten arrived. A larger number of families, mainly from Hadeland, settled there in 1851. Nils Toyen wrote to his father in West Toten during the winter of 1852-53 and told of the opportunities in Glenwood Township.[16] His letter circulated among friends and neighbors during that winter when Stangeland was also promoting emigration. In the spring of 1853, a large party of sixty-four friends, relatives, and neighbors consisting of members of the Glasrud, Hexom, Sivesind, Flaten, Toyen, Voldeng, Bratbakken, Rocksvold, and Vahn families set out for America. They were a typical party of "growth phase" emigrants who had the means to pay for the passage of large family groups and purchase land by preemption when they arrived on the American frontier. Some of them lingered in Wisconsin, but most of them acquired land in or near Glenwood Township that same summer.

A year or two later, however, things were different. The good land in Winneshiek County was all taken. Consequently, when the Glasrud family arrived in 1854, after a year's delay in the Muskego settlement near Racine because of the birth of a son, the pickings were slim.

The Glasruds lived in the Glenwood community for another year without taking land.

Conclusion

The decision of Christian and Berthe Maria Glasrud to emigrate was an individual decision, but it was also part of a collective process—the process of nineteenth-century mass migration from Europe to America. The underlying cause of this process was a population explosion that raced ahead of economic growth—the same cause that underlies the mass migrations of our own day. This migration process involves two elements, which scholars call the "push," and the "pull." The "push" consists of factors at home that make people want to leave. The "pull" directs their movement towards some specific place in the outside world. As long as gross economic disparities exist among various regions of the world, the pull of rich areas will attract migrants from poor areas.

The "push" in this specific case was the rapid growth of population in the upland districts of West Toten, which strained local agricultural resources and impoverished many people in the area. On the farm of Glæserud, the situation grew critical when five sons came of age in one generation. The pressure was greatest on the eldest son, who married while his brothers were still young and before his parents were ready to retire. He needed to do something, go somewhere, but where? He tried the army, he apparently tried a croft on one of the Hexum farms, and then he and Berthe Maria purchased the croft of Glæserudstuen from his parents. They would not need to pay their rent in labor because they owned the former croft, so they could concentrate on improving it and building it into a small farm, as many others in the district were doing in those years. By purchasing Glæserudstuen, Christian did not necessarily renounce his *åseterett* to Glæserud at some future time, nor would this mean that he had renounced his claims to his future inheritance, unless specific evidence indicates that he did so.

However, the "push" did not go away. The standard of living of Christian and Berthe Maria had declined. Moreover, as his younger brothers grew up and wanted to marry, and his parents began to plan for retirement, pressure increased for a collective decision involving all branches of the family. One son, Hans, was settled on the nearby farm of Gamme. Now the younger brothers on Glæserud wanted to marry and raise families of their own. How could they all continue to live on fragments of the same farm? The "push" for somebody to leave was inexorable.

At that very point, a new element came into the picture: news about opportunities in land-rich America. This was the "pull" that gave an unexpected and much more promising sense of direction to the "push." It came in the form of letters from former friends and relatives, people they knew, and from the face-to-face testimony of Elias Stangeland, a man who had lived in America and written a book about it. All of this served to transform the disturbing pressure to leave into an optimistic stream of movement towards a specific destination, where specific opportunities existed in the form of abundant, rich, and cheap land—just what a Norwegian farmer wanted. The push to leave was so great in the Eina district that a whole group of friends and relatives made the collective decision to travel together, and, of course, the opportunity to travel with people they knew was a great aid and comfort to all of them.

Similar processes of "push" and "pull" were working themselves out throughout Norway and many other parts of northern Europe during the 1850's. The decision of Christian and Berthe Maria was part of a collective process that led nearly a million Norwegians to emigrate during their lifetimes. Most Norwegian emigrants of the 1850's were people very much like them. Ingrid Semmingsen, the eminent Norwegian scholar of immigration, wrote that when "the path to the Midwest opened up, [Norwegian farmers in upland areas] saw a new opportunity for themselves and their children to continue their lives as farmers. They preferred this to the alternative of urbanization. One might say that paradoxically rural conservatism prompted them to make a radical decision" to leave their native land.[17] Semmingsen added that many of the early emigrants were, "in their own ways, deviant and oppositional, at odds with

family, society, or authorities. They chose to leave Norway, and they saw the new land as an opportunity to remedy dissatisfactions they had experienced in the homeland."[18]

The "push" and the "pull" came together in the Eina district in the excitement of the winter of 1852-53. Christian and Berthe Maria must have attended the meetings about America and then decided to cast their lot with the emigrants. His parents apparently were still not willing to retire and settle their inheritance on their five sons, but Christian and Berthe Maria could sell Glæserudstuen, their livestock, farm equipment, and other property that they did not intend to take to America. With four children, all of them young enough to travel on half-fare, and a fifth on the way, they joined the large party of friends, relatives, and neighbors and set off for the new world, sailing from Oslo on 26 April 1853 abroad the bark *Deodata*, a Norwegian-owned ship under Captain F. T. Schrøder, arriving in Quebec on 15 June.[19] They traveled from Quebec to Montreal to Toronto to Detroit to Chicago to Racine by a combination of steamships and railroads and came at last to the Norwegian settlement of Muskego near Racine, where several members of the party, including the Glasrud family, remained for some time, and where Berthe Maria gave birth to a son on 17 July 1853. The infant, Claus, was probably baptized by Pastor H. A. Stub in historic Muskego Church, now on the campus of Luther Seminary in St. Paul.

Typically, newly arrived immigrants stayed in one of the older Norwegian settlements for a time, living with friends and finding work in the area while they became familiar with the conditions of life in America. What was unusual in this case was the fact that several members of the *Deodata* party did not stay but purchased teams of oxen and covered wagons and set right out for Glenwood Township, where they arrived on 4 July 1853 and claimed or purchased land within the next few weeks.

When the Glasruds arrived a year later, good land was no longer available in Winneshiek County, but it was still available farther west. A large party of Norwegians from the Luther Valley settlement near Beloit, led by Pastor C. A. Clausen, had gone out across the open prairies in 1853 and settled along the Cedar River around St. Ansgar in Mitchell County, Iowa. In 1854, Norwegians from Wisconsin were streaming to the St. Ansgar settlement, but the Glasruds chose not to join them. They waited for land to open to the north.

In 1855, southeastern Minnesota was opened for settlement as a result of the treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota with the Sioux. The Glasrud and Vahn families headed a few miles north and acquired land in this newly opened tract, in the vicinity of what soon became Spring Grove. They were still within easy visiting distance of their old neighbors from West Toten, who had settled in Glenwood Township.

Three years later, back in Norway, the Glæserud farm was divided to provide a living for the two younger brothers. These brothers married and began to raise families. Christian Glasrud may also have received the remainder of his inheritance at this time. He was entitled to one-fifth of his parents' estate, and the total value of Glæserudstuen, at least as it was appraised in 1865, was only about half of that amount. Perhaps he or Berthe Maria did receive an inheritance from Norway and used it to increase their landholdings in America. In any case, the strategy of emigration served them well, and it was also a good strategy for the members of the family who stayed at home. It relieved pressure on the Glæserud family property in Norway, allowing the descendants of Christian's brothers to remain on three of the four Glæserud farms until at least the time when the family history was published in 1994.

[1] O. S. Johnson, *Nybyggerhistorie fra Spring Grove og omegn Minnesota* (Minneapolis: Forfatterens Forlag, 1920), 208, 211.

[2] Johnson 1920, 187. For a somewhat different translation, see Clarence A. Glasrud and Barbara Crawford Glasrud, *Glæserud – Glasrud: A Family History* (Moorhead, 1994), 12.

[3] One *tønne* was about four bushels. Statistics are from <http://digitalarkivet.uib.no>.

[4] O. M. Norlie, *Norsk lutherske prester i Amerika 1843-1913* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1914), 571-2. Actually, it listed nine from Kolbu, West Toten, and East Toten, since Ottosen and Magelssen were born elsewhere.

[5] The pressures of population growth were felt by the clergy because the number of theological graduates grew much more rapidly than the number of calls available in the Church of Norway. Many theological candidates faced the prospect of waiting half a lifetime for a call, looking for another line of work, becoming a missionary, or accepting a call from a Norwegian Lutheran congregation in America. No wonder the church in America was able to attract able, highly educated leaders who came from privileged backgrounds in Norway. J. A. Ottesen (Norwegian Synod), born 1825 at Fet in Romerike, educated at Christiania University (CT 1849), emigrated 1852, pastor Manitowoc WI 1852-60, Koshkonong WI 1860-91, Decorah IA 1894-96, died 1904. His sister, Christiane Elisabeth, married Pastor Ove Jakob Hjort of Paint Creek, Iowa.

[6] C. F. Magelssen (Norwegian Synod), born 1830 at Daviken in Nordfjord, was educated at Christiania University (CT 1857), emigrated ca. 1859, served in Orfordville WI 1859-80, and in various calls thereafter until his death in 1904.

[7] Gustav Christianson Gjerstad (Hauge's Synod), born 1856 in West Toten, orphaned before the age of nine, emigrated 1876, CT Red Wing Sem. '85, pastor in Mayville ND 1885-91, Clermont IA 1891-8, Story City IA 1898-04, Ada MN 1904-8, Gary MN 1908-19, died 1919.

[8] Johan Anton Blilie (Norwegian Synod), born 1852 on either Blilie or Blilistuen, emigrated 1867, AB Luther '77, CT Concordia '80, pastor in Flandreau SD 1880-1931, died 1935.

[9] Nils Amlund (Norwegian Synod), born 1830 on Amlund in West Toten, emigrated 1860, pastor in Story City IA 1860-83, Glenwood IA 1883-88, Story City 1888-93, died 1902.

[10] Hans Hanson Holte (United Church), born 1867 on the croft of Holte Søndre in Kolbu parish in Toten, emigrated in 1868, attended St. Olaf and Concordia Colleges, CT 1899, pastor in Mt. Horeb WS 1899-1907, Windom MN 1907-10, Bellingham WA 1910-18, Seattle 1925-33, died 1933.

[11] Ole Jacob Johannesen Tollerud (United Church), born 1857 in West Toten, grew up on the croft (*husmannsplass*) of Øverbystuen, emigrated 1903, pastor in Bottineau ND 1910-14, Langham and Saskatoon Sask. 1914-25, Walnut Grove MN from 1925, died 1939.

[12] Halfdan Simensen (United Church), born 1861 in West Toten, grew up on the croft (*husmannsplass*) of Haugom, emigrated 1886, CT United Sem. 1998, Pastor of 10 congregations in Kittson, Marshall, and Roseau Cos. MN 1898-1911, Somers MT 1911-13.

[13] Theodore C. Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America 1825-1860* (Northfield: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1931), 339-42. William Linnevold, "Totnings-Settlementet i Winnesheik County, Iowa," *Decorah-Posten*, 24 May 1929, 5. Stangeland's book, which appeared in the spring of 1853, was *Nogle veiledende Vink for norske Udvandrere til Amerika* (Christiania: Chr. Schibsted, 1853).

[14] Sune Åkerman "Theories and Methods of Migration Research," in *From Sweden to America: A History of the Migration*, eds. Harald Runblom and Hans Norman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1976), 25-32.

[15] Carlton C. Qualey, a native of Spring Grove, documented the course of Norwegian movement towards the frontier in his book, *Norwegian Settlement in the United States* (Northfield: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1938).

[16] William Linnevold, "Totnings-settlementet i Winneshiek County, Iowa," *Decorah-Posten*, 24 and 31 May 1929. Linnevold's mother was a member of the Sivesind family and traveled with this party.

[17] Ingrid Semmingsen, *Norway to America: A History of the Migration*, trans. Einar Haugen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978), 40.

[18] Semmingsen 1978, 22.

[19] <http://www.norwayheritage.com> gives this departure and arrival date, whereas Linnevold said that the departure was on the twenty-eighth. The half-fare generally applied to children under twelve, but statistics show that there was an abundance of "twelve-year-olds" on the passenger lists, and some of them must have been very tall for their age. Almost no thirteen and fourteen-year-olds emigrated.