



North Dakota

FAMILY LINEAGE

Settling in North Dakota

The land that would become the Dakota Territory was originally settled by Native Americans. At the time of early European settlement in the Dakota Territory, the land was occupied by the Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, Lakota and Chippewa. Native Americans played a large part in the success of early settlers. The Mandan Tribe was noted for sharing trade networks because of their location on the Missouri River.

Significant European immigration into the Dakota Territory began when the Northern Pacific Railway reached the Missouri River in 1872 and 1873. Little towns arose along the railroad line between Bismarck and Fargo during these years. The United States Government and the railroad promoted the Dakota Territory as a great place to start farming.

Between 1879 and 1886, the Dakota Territory saw a large increase in population. During that time period, over 100,000 people settled in the Territory. The majority of immigrants came to homestead. Norwegians and Germans from Russia made up the largest portion of immigrants. A second population boom happened at the turn of the century. By 1910, the population in the state was 577,056 and 71% of North Dakotans were born in a foreign country or had parents who were born in a foreign country.

Around the State 1901-1915

Japanese Workers Killed Williston, 1902

Czechs Built ZCBJ Lodge Manitou, 1912

Muslim-Lebanese-Syrians Ross, 1910

Protestant Ukrainians Max, 1911

Poles Dedicate St. Stanislaus Warsaw, 1901

African-Americans Homestead Alexander, 1915

Sons of Herman Organize Statewide New Salem, 1908

Western Ukrainians Wilton, 1913

Dutch See Bright Future Belfield, 1910

Jewish Colony Thrives Marmarth, 1915

News from the Immigrant Settlements

Photo credit: ND Humanities Council

Genealogy

In the past century, the genealogical movement has helped families preserve their family history and learn more about their heritage. Local communities have produced county and city histories, which the North Dakota State Library collects. The State Library is also starting to digitize these histories and make them available online. Private organizations have been collecting and preserving cultural heritage for decades. North Dakotans also have access to Ancestry Library Edition, an excellent online research tool for genealogy. For more information on local histories or Ancestry Library Edition, ask a librarian today!

The content above came from North Dakota State Library items, ND Studies materials and the State Archives. Photo credit: State Historical Society of North Dakota 10190-80-01-15

