

History of the Groningen Community written in the year 1949 given to the Grange through Dell Grove Grange No. 753 (started in 1941) author unknown. Hand written on a piece of paper and donated to the Sandstone History Center.

Groningen was located west of Sandstone, Minnesota

In 1869 the St. Paul and Duluth railroad, known as Northern Pacific Railroad, ran through this territory. At that time this territory was virgin timber, big pine trees, birch, oak, maple, poplar, and swamps full of Tamaracks.

Miller, as the community was known then, was only a flag stop, being only the section house. There was no operator until some three years later. There was an old building that had been an office of an old shingle mill, which had been here some 4 years before.

The only known settler at that time was a hunter and a trapper; William Jacob from London, England, who lived on his land one mile south, south of a small lake which was known as "Jacob's Lake".

In 1885 John Haglin of Duluth became Section Foreman and his brother Severt accompanied him and bought a piece of land adjoining Miller Township, east of the tracks where he lived.

In 1887, Brennen Lumber Company started logging operations here. The logs were cut and hauled to Grindstone Lake with oxen teams, later horses were used. From there the logs were floated down river to Hinckley, where they were sawed into lumber at the mill and later planed. The saw mill was then moved to Washington State, but the mill burnt in the Hinckley fire. They employed up to 500 men in shifts, working night and day.

In 1887, the quarries at Sandstone were started. The stones were hauled by oxen from Sandstone to a siding on the St. Paul and Duluth Railroad tracks at what is now known as "Sandstone Junction", and then a spur track was laid to Sandstone by the Eastern Minnesota now known as the great Northern Railroad.

In 1888 a depot was built at the junction where trains were being run to Sandstone over the new spur track. The same year several families settled in the Friesland and junction territory. Vestman's, Mottaz, Linds, Samelson, Olsons, C. Johnsons, Troolins and A. Anderson.

In 1889 a spur track was laid to Banning where "Barrett and Zimmerman" had started to haul Quarry stone. Train crews of the local freight would go to Banning every week day morning with flat cars and other freight, bringing back cars of sandstone. This spur remained in use until the spring of 1918, when the rails were removed.

In 1892, a bachelor, Andrew Hansen, settled on what is now known as the Louis Larson Place, southwest of town, where he lived until some years after the Hinckley fire. He saved himself by lying down between the furrows of his potato patch. His yoke of oxen

and two cows saved themselves by going to the new railroad cut at the section house. The trapper, William Jacob lived here before the St. Paul and Duluth tracks were built. It was stated that while the mill had been in operation there had been some forty families living here and that a School District #5 had been in operation. Later his brother James Jacob, who was a teacher held school in the office of an old shingle mill, having the Brennan family of 9 children.

In 1890 the Depot at the Junction was moved to Miller with Mrs. Thompson as Operator. The Depot was two flat cars long and some 30 feet wide and two stories high, with living quarters for the operator's family upstairs. That depot was burnt in the Hinckley Fire.

Before the time of the fire, Sivert Haglin had married and had several children. When the fire came they ran to the cot at the section house where they saved themselves. Mr. Haglin, Charlie Peterson, who had settled shortly before that, and Paul Flemstrom, saved the Section house by carrying water in pails from the old slough and throwing it on the fire. They also used some old blankets that Mrs. Haglin had and some that George and Arthur were covered with.

After the fire the Koch Land Company of St. Paul started a colony of Hollander settlers here, after which the Post Office name of "Miller" was changed to "Groningen" in respect to the name of their home town in Holland. The Depot was also changed to Groningen to conform with the post office address.

In 1897 the Koch Land company built a large hotel here, three business places long. Two stories high from lumber gotten from Miller Lake from dead trees killed by the fire.

A Mr. Dietrich started a store and boarding house which he operated for several years, later selling the store to Mr. Deboyser, who later sold it to O.E. Oslund who operated the store and hotel for some time. Later he built a new store east of the tracks across from the old school house. This store and out buildings were burnt in the spring of 1930.

Mr. Deboyser also built a new store west of the track, selling later to J. R. Johnson. This store is now operated by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Haglin. (Quit in 1955 auctioned)

In 1896 and 97 Koch Land Co. cleared a road from Sandstone to Bass Lake, which is now one of our main roads. Being State Aid Road #5 and Country Rd 49.

Shortly before the fire, Magnus Ortenblad bought 80 acres west of the tracks, settling on it after the fire. This place is still in the Ortenbald family.

In 1895, N. O. Erickson family settled on a homestead one mile west, John Bloom adjoining. In 1896 Charles Nelson and J. P. Risen families moved just west of town, and as the years rolled by, others followed and Groningen grew. At one time there were as many as three Operators and an Agent at the Depot, two stores, two potato warehouses, a bank, lumber shed, two blacksmith shops, garage, town hall, butcher shop, stock yard, and a creamery for a short time. While C. J. Hoglund operated a saw & planing mill here

for several years, Mr. Ortenblad started to make bricks, but for some unknown reason it was discontinued. Our first school was started in 1896, and was held in the upstairs room of Severt Haglins home, with seven pupils, who were as follows: Waldie and Ollie Erickson, George and Arthur Haglin, John Sundeen, Peter Bjorklund and Edwin Erickson. Mrs. Leana Erickson of Sandstone was the Teacher. In 1897 our first school house was built and an extension was made in 1908. In 1915 a new two room school was built and the old school house is now the home of Dell Grove Grange. Rent free.