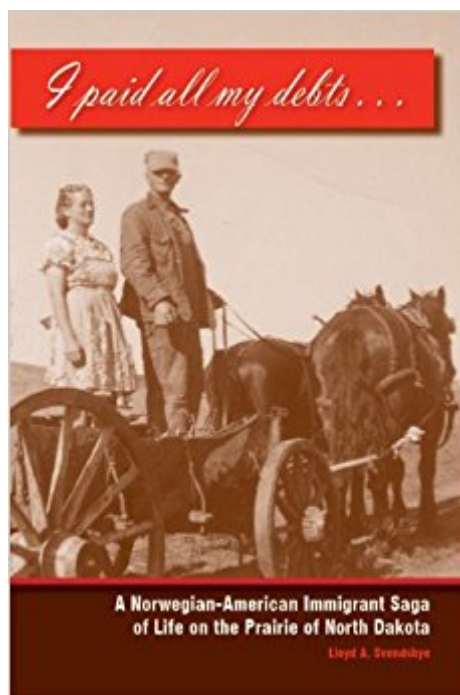




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# I Paid All My Debts: A Norwegian-American Immigrant Saga Of Life On The Prairie Of North Dakota



## Synopsis

The prospect of 160 acres of free land enticed thousands of Norwegians to immigrate to America, with high hopes for a better, more prosperous life. Those who settled in North Dakota never expected they would need several times that amount of land, nor did they imagine the high costs involved in meeting the homestead requirements. This is a story of two families for whom the promise of America miscarried. As they reached a point of borrowing money to move their dream forward the depression hit, as did a drought on the prairie. But the family spirits never died, and the immigrants never wished to be elsewhere.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Norwegians had been coming to America for three generations before Lloyd Svendsbye's family did. The life was hard in Norway and the stories of "the new land" continued to draw those who remained and gave them hope for a better life. So they came at the turn of the 20th century but the land remaining in America was not like the mountains and valleys of Norway that had satisfied the soul for the eons of time. Flat lands with insufficient water was available. Then came drought, economic depression and debt. This is a story of duty, tenacity, responsibility, integrity and struggling before God. The Svendsbye family experience brings the reader back to the life that was, close family, producing food, community ties, and leadership. They developed strength of character, exercised responsibility and care for family and neighbor, developed the gifts God had given them, and practiced stewardship over God's creation. --Al Quiie, former Governor of Minnesota  
encourage everyone interested in immigrant and frontier history to read this book. Many accounts of

immigrants on the frontier are either overly sentimental or bloodlessly objective. Svendsbye avoids both of these extremes by dealing with the harsh and objective realities of frontier life in human contexts. Carefully researched and forthrightly told, this story tells the reader how one family navigated the vicissitudes of frontier life with forbearance, industry, loyalty and faith...and paid all their debts! --Paul Dovre, President Emeritus, Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota

This is a candid and moving account of the life of a Norwegian immigrant couple and their children in North Dakota in the twentieth century. It is a plainly and powerfully told tale of both defeat and accomplishment in trying times and a challenging environment. It deserves a place alongside the works of Aagot Raaen, Carrie Lee Young, and others who have written about Norwegian-American life on the high plains. Lloyd Svensbye's story is something of its own, but he has also given us a book to temper and expand our understanding of Norwegian-American life as a whole. Read and relish it. --Todd W. Nichol, King Olav V Professor of Scandinavian-American Studies, St. Olaf College

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Dr. Lloyd Svendsbye has served as editor-in-chief at the former Augsburg Publishing House; a member of the Church Council of the American Lutheran Church; as president of Luther Northwestern Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota; as academic dean of St. Olaf College, Northfield Minnesota; as president of Augustana College, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He is affiliated with a number of Norwegian-American organizations.

With North Dakota pretty much branded as "flyover country", even among its neighboring states so often lumped into the same category by the "more sophisticated" residents of the East and West coasts, this was an eye-opening read. I hesitated before ordering the book, fearing it might end up a disjointed memoir of a struggling North Dakota family fresh off the boat from Norway. I wasn't far off the mark as far as the book's talking points: hardship, strife, success, failure, birth, death, infinity. But come on, we're talking about North Dakota, the families who settled it, and those who have survived and remain there. This book examines a culture that has withstood everything Mother Nature has hurled in its residents' paths. Politics, economics, education, science, society...they're all covered, and they're all intertwined. Ultimately, this is a story of determination. Do they all live happily ever after? Of course not. One might say the story is still unfolding. I have roots in North Dakota. My dad was raised there, but after World War Two ended he wound up in the state of Washington. Like many North Dakotans, he said it was a good place to be from. Though my family was German-American, the tracings of the Svendsbye family of Norwegian descent echo many of the chapters from my dad's early days in North Dakota. I'm glad I read it.

So good!!! I used google to read more about the author and really enjoying learning about his contribution to society.

great story.

There is enormous distance entailed in moving from Europe to America. There is even greater distance traveled from the beginning of the 20th century to today. The certainty is that those who make such a transition will encounter strangeness and trouble while it occurs. The Svendsbye family makes the (real) journey with unmistakable dignity and integrity that give courage and hope to those who follow them on their own journeys of change.

I bought this book because my ancestors also lived in N Dakota and had immigrated there from Norway. Mine settled on the east side of N. Dakota. Reading it was like listening to my dad telling his story. Alot alike. Was a very interesting book. Hard to believe the hardships they faced, but my dad said there was alot of hunger and bad growing land. Good book for anybody w/ Norwegian ancestry.

A good review of Norwegian settlers.

very refreshing to read this immigrant from norway-worked so hard to pay back what he owed is a lesson to all of us i think and i enjoyed this book. his son wrote it and i applaud his efforts.

I am very interested in this subject area and really wanted to like this book, being a descendant of Norwegian-American immigrants and having grown up in North Dakota. I started reading this book with great expectations. But after laboriously working my way through the first few chapters, I just could not convince myself to continue with it. I even had my wife look at it to see if it was just me, but she had the same problem. Lots of facts and information, but not told in a way that made it at all easy to read. I was disappointed.

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