



They Chose Minnesota
 Video Podcast Transcript
 Minnesota Historical Society

Open with contemporary photos of elementary school-age students & families from diverse backgrounds:
 “What would compel you to leave your home, your family, and all you know for a new life in a new land”?

Contemporary images of immigrants at work and in worship and/or voting:
 “For some it might be the promise of work, for others the hope of freedom from religious or political persecution”.

Historic images of MN immigrants with trunks, suitcases, and personal possessions:
 “Those who chose to settle in Minnesota brought their hopes and dreams as well as material goods. Looking at what people brought with them can help us to understand why they left home”.

*Screen title: **Land!***

Images of handbills advertising land: “For many coming to Minnesota in the 1800’s, the promise was land to farm and homestead”.

Potato Famine illustrations: “Failed crops and rising taxes forced hundreds of thousands of farmers off their lands throughout Europe in the mid-1800s”.

19th century farm family portraits: “Minnesota became the destination for tens of thousands of farmers from Ireland, Germany, Norway, and Sweden”.

*Screen title: **What did they bring?***

19th century photo of horse-drawn plowing: “The plow was an essential tool for preparing land for farming and many immigrants to Minnesota brought their plows with them”.

Plow (9217) photo or film on rotating turntable: “This plow was handmade in Sweden and brought to Minnesota by the Johnson family in 1890”.

19th century photos of family w/sod house, women in domestic farm settings: “As lands were cleared and homesteads established, immigrant families put to work items they had used in their home country for maintaining a household”.

Demonstration of herb grinder (64.19): “Lars Anderson made this herb grinder in his native Sweden and brought it with him when he immigrated to Minnesota in 1905”.

Demonstration of sugar cutter (1989.378.1) or on rotating turntable: “This cutting tool was brought from Sweden to St. Paul to cut up blocks of sugar into cubes”.

Image of spinning wheel 70.16.40: “This spinning wheel was brought to Minnesota from Norway to make clothes on a farm in Waseca County”.

Historic illustrations of cobbler, blacksmith, and silversmith: “In the mid-1800s many Europeans who worked with their hands found themselves out of work due to the invention of labor-saving machines”.

Photos of 19th century MN business storefronts or business card/handbills: “Many of these artisans established successful businesses in Minnesota”.

Screen title: **What did they bring?**

Cobbler tools (9780): “Swedish immigrant Carl Johnson used these tools as a shoemaker in St. Paul”.

Lace pillow (9777) and examples of finished lace: “Mary Miller brought this pillow from Austria to practice her trade as a lace maker”.

Screen title: **Forget me not**

“In addition to the practical things needed to establish a new life, immigrants also brought personal items which served as reminders of family, friends, and cultural traditions”.

Screen title: **What did they bring?**

Historic portrait images: “Photographs were the most typical way to remember loved ones”.

Hair jewelry: “But in the 1800’s it was also common for people to braid a necklace, bracelet, or watch chain from their hair to give to family members as a keepsake”.

Hmong story cloth (1997.112.1): “This story cloth, made in a Thailand refugee camp, depicts the Laotian Civil War which forced many Hmong people to flee their homes after the Vietnam War. It is a bittersweet reminder of the difficult circumstances which sometimes brought immigrants to Minnesota”.

Plate (65.246) and kibbeh-maker (75.124): “Other items reflect happier memories, like this Swedish decorative plate, or this grinder used to prepare kibbeh; a traditional Lebanese dish made from wheat and ground meat”.

Screen shot of MNHS web page and “family history” page: “Want to explore your family’s journey to Minnesota? Go to www.mnhs.org and click on the “family history” page to get started”.